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59th year of publication

The end of our public health-care system?

Harry der Nederlanden

"The end of medicare!" shrieked one headline. The Supreme Court had just declared Quebec's prohibition of private health insurance untenable. Normand Laberge of the Canadian Association of Radiologists called the ruling "an atomic bomb on the health-care system." Others fumed that in order to rescue Canadians from the hell of waiting lists, the Supreme Court has cast the public health-care system into limbo.

John Ibbotson of the *Globe and Mail* wailed, "Everything is turned upside down!" Those on the left have grown accustomed to having the Supreme Court justices onside, but this judgment seems to lay the axe to the central icon of Canada's welfare state. Irony of ironies, the Court cited the Charter, the source of judicial social engineering according to the right, to open the door to private health care.

Jeffrey Simpson, in the same issue of the *Globe and Mail*, writing as if he'd been stunned by a brick, declared the "sacred cow" of public-only medicine finished.

What to make of this? After

several provincial studies, a major (though largely ignored) study by the Senate and an expensive commission chaired by Romanow — all laying out strategies to plug the leaks in the great ark of medicare — and a recent infusion of \$41 billion by the Martin Liberals to fix public health-care for a generation — after all this, did a handful of judges sink the entire enterprise?

The ruling seems to have caught almost everyone by surprise. The case before the Supreme Court was launched about seven years ago by George Zeliotis, a Montreal patient who had to wait nearly a year for hip replacement surgery. Afterward, he and his doctor, Jacques Chaoulli, took the case to court, arguing that being forced to wait so long was a violation of a person's right to life, liberty and security of the person as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights. The case was argued before the Supreme Court a year ago and passed out of public awareness until the justices announced their surprise ruling June 9.

The majority of the Court agreed

that Quebec's law prohibiting the purchase of health insurance for treatment by private clinics did violate the rights of Quebecers. After examining evidence that the public health system often imposes waits that create great hardship and are even responsible for deaths, the majority of justices (four of seven)

declared that under such conditions a person should have the right to seek to save his or her own life by turning to private resources if necessary.

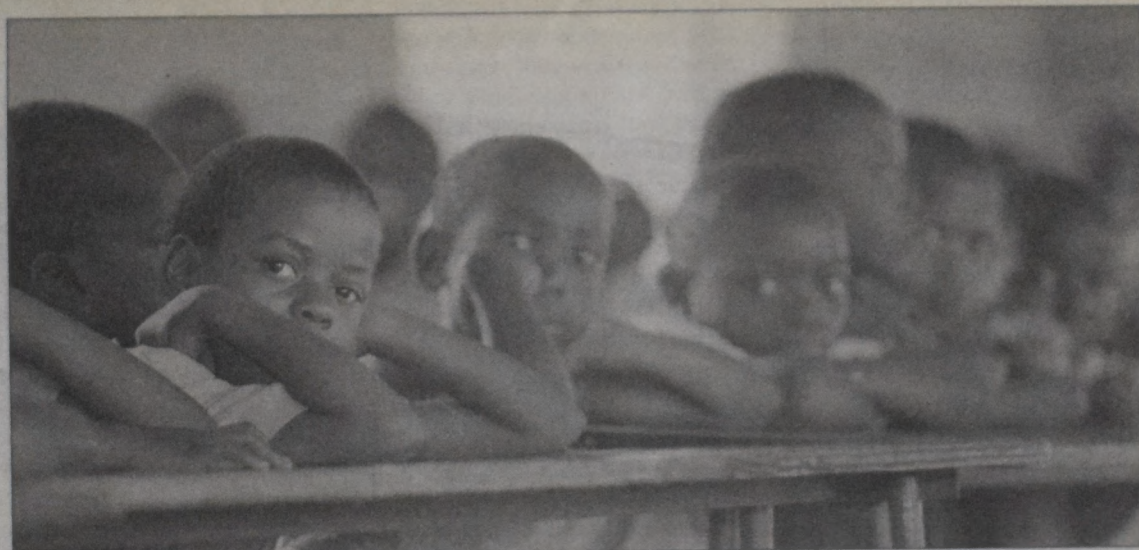
The Court in effect reasoned that if the state asserts that it has a monopoly on health-care, as in Quebec, then it must provide

care in a reasonably prompt and competent manner. Otherwise, it is depriving a person of the freedom and the right to get life-saving treatment readily available elsewhere.

The Court wrote: "The [Quebec] prohibition on obtaining private

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What debt relief means for Africa



African AIDS orphans

Abraham McLaughlin

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA — It's one of the biggest write-offs of debt ever. And it could spark major improvements in the lives of the world's poorest people.

The recent \$40 billion debt cancellation agreed to by rich-nation finance ministers will, for instance, enable Zambia to hire 7,000 new teachers. Likewise, Tanzania will no longer spend 12 percent of its annual budget on servicing its debts. Instead, it could build new hospitals and roads.

In all, 18 nations — 14 of them in Africa — with 296 million people

will be debt-free. Eventually, a total of 38 nations with 552 million people may get full debt relief.

For all the impressive figures, though, the deal strikes a middle ground. For some it's too small: At most, it cancels less than one-sixth of Africa's \$295 billion debt — and leaves out crucial countries like Nigeria.

For others, it's too risky: By erasing bad debts — and allowing struggling nations to apply for new loans — it could spark a new cycle of dependency.

Either way, it does provide a respite from poverty's pressures. And it may help countries lift

themselves up through better education, stronger agriculture, and expanded trade. "In theory, it primes the pump," says Stephen Hayes of the Corporate Council on Africa in Washington.

But who pays? Consider three things:

- First: In the short term, it's not all that expensive. The US will pitch in up to \$1.75 billion over 10 years. That's its share of a pledge by rich nations to cover \$16.7 billion in debt repayments the 18 countries would have made.

See Debt relief on p. 3 ...



Marie Deschamps



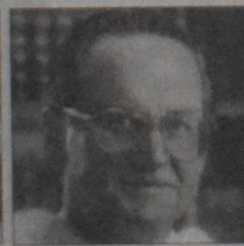
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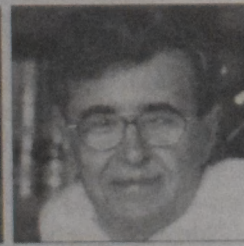
Michel Bastarache



John C. Major



Ian Binnie



Louis LeBel

News

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health insurance, while it may be constitutional in circumstances where health-care services are reasonable as to both quality and timeliness, is not constitutional where public systems fail to deliver reasonable services.

"Life, liberty and security of person must prevail."

The Court was not asked to weigh the merits of public vs privatized health-care. The case was about the right of an individual to do everything within his power to save his own life – and that includes using his own financial resources to get timely treatment wherever it is available.

The Court did, however, come close to making what amounted to public policy or political judgments, for it looked at other countries like Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands that have permitted private clinics to operate alongside a strong public health-care system. It did so to weigh individual rights over against the public good: it examined the often repeated charge that such a parallel system means the collapse of the public system. The government argued that the ban on private medicine was a justified limitation on individual rights because it is necessary to sustain the public good of medicare.

After looking at the European examples, however, the justices came to the conclusion that a certain level of private health-care can subsist alongside a public system. In fact, they pointed out that the wealthy are already making use of those resources by traveling elsewhere for treatment. The public monopoly causes inequality by prohibiting those of limited income to access those same private resources through the purchase of health insurance. To trap those without wealth in a system that forces them to languish and sometimes die as they wait for treatment is contrary to the Charter's guarantees of life, liberty and the security of the person, the Court concluded.

The justices wrote: "The evidence suggests that a contribution of direct payments by patients, allowing private insurance to cover some services, even in publicly funded hospitals, and an expanded role for the private sector in the delivery of health services are the factors which have enabled countries to achieve broader coverage of health services

for all their citizens."

Prime Minister Paul Martin and the Health Minister did not instill a lot of confidence with their assurances that a private health-care system was not going to happen in Canada. They pointed to the \$41 billion infusion the Liberal government has already promised over the next 10 years and urged patience as the government plan to cut down wait times is implemented. The improvements in the present system, they promised, would prevent the expansion of private health-care.

Although Quebec is unique in some ways, many legal experts were of the opinion that those on long waiting lists in other provinces will sue for the right to go outside the system, using the same argument. It's only a matter of time, they say, before private clinics make their inroads into every province.

Many commentators used the occasion to point out that Canada's public-only system is far from pure. It already combines private and public resources in several ways. Quite a few were quick to point out that Paul Martin and those in his class did not languish on waiting lists but make use of private medicine themselves. Canada's system is also a hybrid in that the state purchases health-care from doctors and from private clinics. The latter are not employees of the state but private businesses.

Some agree with Roy Romanow – that the Court ruling is a step on the slippery slope toward two-tiering in which the rich will be able to get to the head of the line. Romanow, in an article in the *Globe and Mail* said that "two-tiering represents a march backward in time, to when good health depended on the size of one's wallet – to a situation like that which currently prevails in the United States, where last year, more than 50 percent of all personal bankruptcies were due to health-care expenses."

Defenders of the Court ruling suggest that allusions to the U.S. are a scare tactic, and that we do better to look at the European examples cited by the justices.

They also point to the fact that in some parts of the country, we already have a hybrid system. B.C., for example, already has 14 private clinics, according to

Adscam's mirror

Phil Reinders

Most of us mistook the browning ripeness for mere age spots. However, the grey velvet now fuzzing over the Liberal party is a sure sign not of longevity but deep decay.

The Gomery Inquiry into the Liberal sponsorship scandal has uncovered levels of corruption unseen, at least publicly, in Canadian politics. This is the stuff of 1930's Gotham City graft or Chicago style kickbacks. Indeed, this is nothing new. Adscam reminds us of a vandalism of life that has marked human history, and Gomery's investigation displays yet another exhibit of a larger spiritual corruption that lies at the heart of political corruption.

One of the interesting facets of the Gomery Inquiry is its theological nature. No matter how hard one might wish to keep theology out of public life, there it is. Adscam is a case study in classic spiritual reality. G.K. Chesterton once noted that this sort of corruption – sin as some call it – "is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved." And isn't Gomery providing ample evidence and mounting a convincing case for its reality?

Pointing condemning fingers and a "kick the bums out" protest in the sponsorship scandal is so easy – not to mention good fun. But what if this sorry chapter is, in fact, a mirror of the ironies and nuances of the human condition? What if it is reflective of the mixed motives in each human heart? I wonder if Adscam might be a teachable moment, not merely for the Liberals but for a nation?

Think about it. Corruption is essentially a parasite in a good society like Canada. Like a virus invading a healthy body, it latches on to what's good and leeches its power from what is right. In Adscam, the good thing of a generous line of credit offered by trusting citizens to elected and public officials, meant for effecting a public good, is hijacked for projects of self-interest. Good and evil closely intertwined. How ironic that while millions of dollars were padding the pockets of Liberal interests at the same time many more tax dollars helped welcome refugees, care for the desperately sick, and feed impoverished children.

The paradox of government, life, and the human heart, is that both good and evil, corruption and health grow alongside one another. Isn't Gomery simply an echo of what's inside each of us, rumors of noble motives and rumblings of the most petty, self-absorbed acts? Which means that even in something as disheartening as the sponsorship scandal, there's something hopeful too; that despite all the evident pollution and corruption, there is a deeper good at work in life that we're rightly incensed when it's callously trampled by white collar vandals.

And isn't the paradox of corruption a reminder that this is not solely a Liberal problem, contra Mr. Harper. No doubt, Adscam is the demon seed of inbred Liberals, the end product of a languishing rot – and we all know what to do when we find this sort of thing lurking in the refrigerator. But I'm also skeptical of someone who points the finger without checking the mirror because isn't the bigger truth we are all walking contradictions? Doesn't corruption affect each of us? I shudder to think of submitting my life to a Gomery-like public investigation because it would find plenty of evidence for all sorts of shiftiness, hypocrisy and general self-interest.

The sad reality is this sorry script will likely play out in another governing party, regardless of their political stripe. I don't think that makes me overly cynical though – I still expect high standards from public officials. I wonder if it's a sober acknowledgement that something is out of sync in this world. On bad days that can make me jaded, but mostly it hatches in me a deeper hope for a world that works right, a wish for a government that is concerned with justice for its citizens, a yen for elected officials who make politics a transparent and civil affair. It's a realization that makes me hope for something better for myself, that this sorry selfish person in the mirror might become more gracious, with a quicker compassion, someone who is good and sound.

Mostly, that sort of sober sanity makes me hope for a bigger healing than any change in government will ever deliver.

This piece was first published in The Calgary Herald. Phil Reinders is pastor of First Church in Calgary, Alberta.

Lisa Priest (*Globe and Mail*), that provided surgery to about 50,000 British Columbians last year for a fee. Across the country there are 39 privately operated MRI machines, CT scanners and PET scanners.

In Ontario the province pays for MRIs at privately owned clinics, while in Quebec those unwilling to wait can opt to get an MRI done at their own expense.

Senator Michael Kirby, after whom the Kirby Report on health-care was named, thought the decision would prod the federal and provincial governments to finally move to reduce waiting lists. He predicted that it would not produce a parallel private

system but improvements in the public system.

Richard Gwyn (*Toronto Star*), while reluctant to charge the court with "judicial activism" (a right-wing theme), did just that. The justices arrogated to themselves the competency to make judgments about the superiority of European health systems that even experts are reluctant to make, he charged. He cited the minority judgment of Justices Ian Binnie and Louis LeBel. They said, "We can all support the vague objective of 'public health care of a reasonable standard within a reasonable time.'"

"Most people have opinions, many of them conflicting, about

how to achieve it," said the two justices. "A legislative policy is not 'arbitrary' just because we may disagree with it."

They argued that it is not the role or competence of judges to decide what is a reasonable wait period or what is a reasonable level of health-care. That should be left to the political process. "It will be very difficult," they wrote, "for those designing and implementing a health-care system to predict when judges will think its provisions cross the line from what is 'reasonable' into the forbidden territory of what is 'unreasonable.'"

Politics

...Debt relief continued from p.1

- Second: One of the larger bills – some \$6 billion – will be paid by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It's one of the global institutions to whom poor nations owe debt. And under the deal, it's supposed to cover those debts from its own "existing resources."
- Third: Crunch time will reportedly come after 2008, when the US and other G-8 nations (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia) will have to pony up billions to cover the amount owed to two other big lending institutions: The World Bank and the African Development Bank. The G-8 ministers promised to "cover the full costs" of the loans.

But one of the dangers, experts say, is that rich nations won't fully replenish global lenders' coffers, which could trim the size of future loans. In theory, however, poor countries won't need to borrow so much, because the debt deal will boost their economies.

As for the poor nations, the deal is expected to save them a total of about \$1.5 billion in debt payments each year. They're supposed to spend this on education, healthcare, agriculture, and infrastructure. According to the CIA World Factbook, the 18 governments' total spending was \$23.5 billion in 2004. So the \$1.5 billion represents a sizable, though not enormous, amount of freed-up cash.

In Tanzania, a previous debt-relief deal helped end school fees, enabling 1.5 million extra children to attend classes, says DATA, a debt-relief group in Washington.

The deal was generally well received in Africa. "We greatly appreciate the initiative," said Ugandan official James Nsaba Buturo. It means "we can have more money ... directed to education, health, infrastructure, and social sectors," said Mozambique Prime Minister Luisa Diogo.

Yet there's concern in Africa about a major missing nation: Nigeria. Unlike the initial 18 nations, Nigeria doesn't pass muster for cutting corruption and better transparency. But as West Africa's anchor country, it's key to regional stability. A recent US intelligence assessment warned it could face "outright collapse" in the next 15 years. It's the world's seventh-largest oil producer, yet

Calvin and Bush

Several years ago I received a phone call from the office of a member of parliament representing the old Reform Party. His assistant let me know that he would be at Redeemer on such and such a date, and would I like him to speak to my class. I immediately declined the offer, indicating that we were behind in the material to be covered and couldn't spare the hour. What I did not tell her was that I was reluctant to see my class turned into a partisan political platform by someone who would shortly be seeking re-election. One of my colleagues did indeed take up the offer, so I sat in on his class to see what happened. Sure enough, as I had feared, the MP had little of substance to say and he did indeed manage to turn his "lecture" into a campaign speech.

I had this episode in the back of my mind when I heard that President Bush was to speak at Calvin College's commencement. I was not surprised to hear that many faculty and students objected to his presence, given that a partisan political leader inevitably carries with him the lingering scent of the controversies he and his policies may have stirred up. By hosting such a leader, the institution could be perceived to be approving such policies as well as the person behind them.

I will not comment on the substance of Bush's agenda or on the concerns of the faculty who took out the newspaper advertisement in advance of the President's visit. However, I think it worth noting that the American constitution prescribes a presidency which must inevitably unite in a single office what might be called kingly and prime-ministerial duties.

Here in Canada last month we saw turmoil in the House of Commons as a sitting government was nearly defeated on a motion of nonconfidence. Two days earlier we saw a dramatic defection to the government front benches, along with the animosities this stirred up on the opposition side of the chamber. Meanwhile, the Queen touched down out west for her tour of Saskatchewan and Alberta. As head of state, the Queen stays above partisan politics and could thus remain blithely undisturbed by the events in Ottawa.

has \$36 billion in debt.

The G-8 ministers acknowledged Nigeria's need for debt relief. But they've got to do more than that, argues Francis Kornegay of the Center for Policy Studies in Johannesburg: "If you're talking about stabilizing Africa, you've got to focus on countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Congo, and Angola, which pull regional weight." None of those was included in initial rounds, mostly because they're considered too corrupt.

Also, many Africans worry the G-8 focus on Africa will distract from African solutions to the continent's problems. "There's a serious concern it might eclipse NEPAD," and other indigenous institutions, says Mr. Kornegay, referring to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, a South-Africa-backed program that aims to boost good governance.

Another key concern is that the deal is not innovative enough. "There have got to be mechanisms so the same thing doesn't happen over and over," says Mr. Hayes, referring to the aid and lending paradigms that have dominated development work for decades. "I don't think Africa develops without a middle class," he says, and that will emerge only through trade and entrepreneurship.

But that's where issues like easing trade barriers come in, he says. Now, with the major debt deal out of the way, trade and other topics are likely to come to the fore in the run-up to the July summit of G-8 leaders in Scotland, where poverty and global warming will top the agenda.

Abraham McLaughlin is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor. Wire service material was used in this report.

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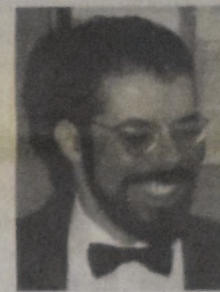
Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

South of the border, however, head of state and head of government are combined in the single office of president. This means that, whenever a president undertakes a duty appropriate for a supra-partisan head of state, he inevitably runs the risk of being perceived as a mere prime minister, caught up in all the divisiveness of the day-to-day partisan political process. This is undoubtedly how many of the Calvin faculty perceived Bush's participation in last Saturday's graduation exercises.

Now I feel comfortable in the judgement that Bush gave a quite good speech – a "kingly" speech really – appealing to the students' youthful ideals and urging them on to service of God and their fellow human beings. Nothing was said about stem cell research, judicial nominations or Iraq. Moreover, his mention of Abraham Kuyper was a good example of knowing an audience and appealing to something to which they can easily relate. Bush, in my estimation, successfully left his prime-ministerial role behind and spoke in his kingly role.

Yet because a president must be both king and prime minister, sorting out the responsibilities of each and trying to maintain an effective separation between the two are not easy to do. Presidents rarely make good kings and good prime ministers at the same time. They usually excel at one or the other, and they frequently excel at neither. The events last month in Grand Rapids, Michigan, illustrate at the very least the inevitable conflict of roles that comes with an office combining the functions of head of state and head of government in the same person.



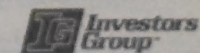
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Editorial

On synod, management, bureaucracy and tents

Harry der Nederlanden

As I write this, CRC Synod is still in session. I watched parts of some debates on the internet. The webcast isn't much better than just listening to a radio, really, for the tiny 2 by 2 inch screen doesn't allow you to read faces. But voices do convey something of the speakers' emotion, as do the ways people reason. In the debate over what to do about First Toronto, I sensed a deep anxiety. But I also sensed a similar anxiety in the two reports on education – on day-school education and church education.

A large segment of our denomination is anxious that if the CRC doesn't act quickly to quash what they see as the unbiblical actions of one congregation, this will signal a fundamental lack of commitment to the authority of Scripture and a surrender to the spirit of the times. Some are, of course, also worried that it will prompt more people to leave the CRC to join those who left over the women-in-office issue.

Rev. Calvin Bremer, after being appointed as executive director of the CRC, spoke about the importance of cultivating a sense of identity in the CRC. That same concern is discernible in the report on day-school education. A lot of work, valuable work, was done in the quest to find ways to make Christian school education available to more of our children – and to children outside the CRC. To discharge our mission in this complex society, in a huge variety of vocations and situations, requires a sophisticated and well-articulated world view. So our leaders are doing their best to help us find ways to do this more efficiently and in a more inclusive way. However, it means more planning, more committees, more machinery.

Similarly, the report on church education calls for greater coordination on different levels within the churches, more training of teachers, and suggests perhaps they should even have credentials. More committee work, more machinery.

To draw a political parallel (sorry if you think that's nasty), perhaps CRC Synod hasn't declared a war on wishy-washy identity, but we are committing ourselves

to denomi-nation building. That's what synods are for, of course. And I'm not of that camp that suspects that all worldly structuring and organizing efforts somehow adulterate the spiritual nature of the church. The church is, among other things, also a social organization with legal dimensions, and we should be grateful that we have competent administrators, accountants and legal consultants in our midst.

It is important to take care of all that organizational stuff. It isn't just impersonal; at some point it makes a difference to people. It may make a difference, for example, whether your child or grandchild can afford to go to Christian school.

However, an excess of anxiety about identity and tightening the boundaries can also be harmful. If we attack these matters as though everything depends on our keeping the troops motivated and marching in straight lines, the more assiduous we become, the more our anxieties will grow. Our society and our world are in the throes of huge and rapid changes, and there is not one single cause behind them like liberalism or secularization or consumerism or entropy. (I threw the latter in for the scientists among us.)

We're not the sort of people or the sort of denomination that likes to fly by the seat of our pants. In his book *After Virtue*, Alisdair MacIntyre suggests that in an era dominated by scepticism about the external reality of norms, the manager becomes the archetypal character of our society. And our typical way of dealing with issues is to create bureaucracy. That is borne out in our government. But also in the CRC. We do well in North American society because we're great organizers.

We may bridle at the questionnaires we are asked to fill out when the council decides to do a congregational assessment, but that's only because we think we can construct a better questionnaire – one better attuned to our theology and ecclesiology. What we want is another committee to revise the questionnaire.

We are the darlings of government bureaucrats. When the politicians speak at the opening of our latest retirement manor or day school, they laud our organizational skills. And well they should. We do things more efficiently by far, I suspect, than the government.

Sometimes, however, I wonder whether we're succumbing to the managerial mentality. We can no longer leave anything to chance. We can no longer simply let things happen and fly by the seat of our pants. We want to map the entire cosmos and make rational extrapolations into the future so we can make our 20-year plans. We sit down with our mission statements and break them down into goals, objectives and outcomes – measurable outcomes – so five years later we can come back with our questionnaires to tick off where we're succeeding and where we're not meeting our goals.

Whereupon it is time to do some serious soul-searching and butt-kicking. Mostly the latter. Since we're good Calvinists (well, maybe not), the butts we kick the most are our own. If the world, our nation, our economy and the lifestyle of our children does not conform to the pattern of our neo-Kuyperian dreams and fantasies, we conclude it is because we have not organized home, school, church, labor, government and culture according to the right principles.

Call out the Law-structure of the Cosmos Revision Committee; we have work to do!

Meanwhile, as we keep fine-tuning our goals and objectives, our theology and liturgies, organizational structures and institutional flow-charts and bring in experts in social engineering, scads of people are joining those wingy-dingy charismatics and Pentecostals, who don't have a clue when it comes to any of these things.

One wonders sometimes whether the Holy Spirit down deep doesn't have it in for managers. I'm almost convinced that he doesn't read manuals, flow charts and perhaps not even our Handbook of Reformed Church Polity. But that's probably just a reflection on me, because when Henry de Moor, our expert in church order, speaks, I get the impression that the Holy Spirit is with him. But maybe that's because I usually agree with him and assume the Holy Spirit is on my side.

To think that the Holy Spirit doesn't use the tools of management and organizational structure is wrong, of course. Nothing is closer to the Spirit's heart than the corporate nature of the church, and for us to live together and to act in harmony and unity of purpose, we need someone calling out the cadence and planning the march route. It doesn't just happen. Buildings don't just rise magically from holes in the ground and a curriculum doesn't sprout from a tulip bulb.

But there is such a thing as taking too much responsibility for everything, trying too hard to sew it all up so there are no details that aren't stitched down and ironed flat. When we begin to do that, we are driven by anxiety rather than by trust.

In his magisterial biography of John Calvin, William Bouwsma paints a picture of a man tortured by all sorts of anxieties; in fact, Bouwsma projects most of the anxieties of the 16th century into Calvin's soul. It's a good corrective to previous overly reverential biographies, but I'm not sure it's accurate. Calvin's writings convey to me not so much a sense of anxiety as a deep and steady trust.

Calvin's Institutes do have an architectonic structure, but when compared to the writings of the great Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas, one is impressed by their simplicity. While the writings of the great scholastics may be compared to a gothic cathedral, Calvin's remind me of a simple country church. The grandeur derives from the landscape and the starry sky overhead to which the steeple points.

Waiting on the Lord is also an active part of faith. Faith must also seek the simple things, cut through the complexity and busyness, resist the temptation to quickly reach for the sword to lop off an ear here and a nose there. The Kingdom doesn't always come on our time, according to our preconceived ideas and within the parameters of our organizational charts.

Sometimes we are so mesmerized by our own vision of the Kingdom that we respond to it like Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration: we say to one another, "This is so fine; let's turn them into tents and stay here forever!"

But tents are for taking down and folding up. Tents are for travelers, for pilgrims, for tourists. Tents are easy to step out of so you can see the trees, the hills, the valleys, the sky – things that God has made, things he has promised to bring us back to in the fullness of time, when all things are under his management.

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Letters/Opinion

Lighthouse Centre – aiding refugees

I would like to thank your writer Sonya VanderVeen Feddema for sharing the story (CC June 13, 2005) on her Journey With Refugees.

The Lighthouse Centre in Toronto, which has helped immigrants and refugees since the 1970's, applauds churches and individuals who assist in the sponsorship and settlement process. It is often a difficult and demanding situation, needing patience and sensitivity, and the writer has captured much of that.

As with any newcomers, refugees wish to become socially and economically independent as soon as possible. But many come with haunting memories, trauma,

and continuing fears that need to be dealt with. Understanding, supporting, enabling, and sometimes professional counselling are some of the things needed to assist refugees on their journey. And if we can, do so showing the Lord's love, both as the reason for our actions and for the hope that others may see the Lord through this work.

We urge churches to continue refugee sponsorship. No, we cannot resolve all the issues and conflicts worldwide, but we can help, one family at a time.

Ben Vanderlugt
Executive Director
The Lighthouse Christian Centre
Toronto

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada calls BC court ruling very disappointing

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is disappointed in the British Columbia Court of Appeal decision, handed down June 13, in *Kempling v. The British Columbia College of Teachers*.

"The court says, in effect, that teachers must stay silent on controversial subjects or risk disciplinary action by their professional association," says Janet Epp Buckingham, director of law and public policy for the EFC.

The case arose when the College of Teachers disciplined B.C. teacher, Chris Kempling, for "conduct unbecoming a teacher" on the basis of various writings, mostly letters to the editor, on homosexuality.

In its decision, the Court of Appeal applies a Supreme Court of Canada decision, *Ross v. Moncton District School Board*, where a teacher's freedom of expression was curtailed on the basis that his off-duty, anti-Semitic writings created a poisoned atmosphere towards Jews in the school. The Court of Appeal says that this case justifies the College of Teachers curtailing

the freedom of expression of teachers even in the absence of evidence of any effect in the school.

Mr. Justice Lowry, writing for the court, rules that Kempling's expression is "not deserving of a high level of constitutional protection" because it "crossed the line of reasoned debate into discriminatory rhetoric." But Lowry failed to indicate which of Kempling's writings constitutes this discriminatory rhetoric.

"This decision will put a chill on the public expression of all professionals," says Buckingham. "Many will fear that in the current heated climate of debate on issues like same-sex marriage, their professional associations may seek to discipline their members if they support the 'politically incorrect' side."

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada intervened in this case as part of the Canadian Religious Freedom Alliance. The Alliance's factum is posted on-line on the EFC's website.

(www.evangelicalfellowship.ca)

International debt deal a good start but more is needed

The reports from London that the Group of Eight finance ministers recommends to forgive that at least \$40 billion (U.S.) worth of debt owed to international lenders (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank) by 18 of the world's poorest nations, most of them in Africa, is good news. Especially if this historic deal is approved promptly by the G-8 leaders at their July 6-8 summit in Scotland and implemented immediately.

Debt cancellation and interest relief effectively free up billions of dollars for poor countries to spend on their own health, education, economic and social programmers at poverty reduction.

As Ralph Goodale, Canada's finance minister, rightly reminded his colleagues: "Africa is truly a continent in crisis. It faces enormous economic and human development challenges, the scope and scale of which defy comprehension. For example, more than 260 000 people die in Africa of AIDS and Malaria – the equivalent of the recent Asian tsunami – every single month."

Indeed, the London deal is a good start. But, obviously much more needs to be done to lift millions of poor people's unbearable burdens.

Stephen Lewis, U.N. special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, who has been prophetically urging Prime Minister Paul Martin and other political leaders to devote 0.7 percent of the gross domestic product to foreign aid by 2015, will also be encouraged if, as Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission for Africa recommends: a doubling of global aid flows to Africa in the period immediately ahead." According to Goodale, Canada will reach this milestone of "doubling" by 2008.

While the NDP rightfully negotiated extra money in the recent budget deal with the Liberals, Canada's aid spending will reach only 0.42 per cent by 2015, just over half way the international target. Canada's

foreign aid now totals \$3.5 billion. To meet the 0.7 percent goal by 2015 would require an additional \$30 billion over the decade.

Clearly, Canada continues to face serious moral and fiscal challenges if our country is to give leadership tackling two particularly tough barriers to African well-being – those of debt and disease.

As Goodale pointedly declared in London: "The current debate about further relief for the poorest of the poor needs to end. It needs to end now. No more excuses. No more delays. Let's just do it!" By all means.

As many as 20 other countries could be eligible for the debt relief if they meet targets on good governance and battling corruption, potentially pushing the total debt cancellation package to \$55 billion.

Parliament must courageously confront the critical challenge to help build a humane future for all the members of the global community. Our political leaders and Mps must set aside their partisan interests. They, we and our non-government organizations must untidily work for public policies, budget priorities and action strategies that will soon help liberate desperate neighbors the world over from violence and oppression, from poverty and disease, from hopelessness and despair.

The media should provide reliable reports on what not only the governing Liberals are actually doing, but also informing citizens on what opposition Conservatives, the Bloc, and the NDP are advocating must be done by Canada. Then we all can challenge and/or hold our elected representatives to their respective promises, especially during the up coming federal elections.

We owe it to our conscience and the world to give generously and to act justly. Remember, vulnerable people's lives and poor nations' futures hang in the balance!

Gerald Vandezande
Scarborough ON



Christian Courier

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Remembrance

Hunger winter: We become beggars

In the last chapter Sietze Jongsma described how he managed to get by a German checkpoint and avoid being sent to Germany. In his pocket Sietze has an address: his pastor gave him directions to his brother's house in Nijkerk. There Sietze hopes to find shelter for him and his family.

HdN

Arriving in Nijkerk just as darkness was descending, we asked directions to the De Vries' home. When at last we found it, we saw that it was a large, stately home in an upper-class neighborhood. I went to the door by myself and received a warm welcome – until I asked whether we could stay overnight and whether they could spare some food. Then the face of my upper-class host clouded over.

Since his own brother had sent us here, however, it was hard for him to refuse us. He invited Ankje and the kids, who were still standing outside, to come in. Although we were aware that our presence was less than welcome, we settled in as well as the circumstances allowed. Our hosts served up a spartan meal. Although it didn't quench our hunger, we were glad for what we got. As the evening wore on, the relations became less strained, although they remained distant.

So it was a relief when it was time to go to bed.

Passing through several hallways and past several different rooms, we finally arrived in a spacious, well-furnished bedroom. The room was very cold, but there were plenty of blankets. However, there were twin beds, and my wife and I were used to cuddling together when it was cold, so we missed one another's warmth. After a while we crawled together into the same bed.

The next morning, as soon as we heard the first noises from downstairs, we found our way through the many hallways downstairs. Our host was feeding the stove and his wife preparing breakfast. We saw no signs, however, that they were preparing any food for us to take with us to eat on the way.

When it came time for us to leave, our fears were confirmed. We had to face the prospect of a day without anything to eat, knowing very well that the day's journey would require all our strength. At our previous stops

we had said goodbye with some reluctance, but here we were glad to be leaving.

Our plan was to reach Hardewijk that day. I had found an address of a deacon in the Reformed Churches, in the hope that he would be willing to provide shelter for us or help us find it.

About noon we found ourselves in the village of Putten. The time had passed quickly, for it was a beautiful winter day, slightly above freezing. Ideal for walking. In fact, the journey through the Veluwe would have been enjoyable had our plight not been so worrisome.

We had carefully rationed the lunch provided for us by our hosts of the previous night and still had a little left over. So we looked for a place in Putten where we could buy a cup of coffee and share our meager lunch.



The once picturesque village was badly damaged. Numerous homes were burned to the ground. There were very few people to be seen. All the men from the village had been rounded up by the Nazis. All we saw was the occasional elderly man. The eyes of the remaining people of Putten were filled with grief and despair.

Here, too, we saw many people on the road hunting food for the families they had left behind in the big cities.

We asked an old man with a fine beard if he could direct us to a café. Of the many hotels and cafes only one remained. He told us the awful story of what had happened in Putten and the suffering of the people.

The leftover sandwiches quickly vanished into our hungry stomachs. The rest in the café did us good, but we had much farther to go. It was another 13 km to Hardewijk. Although our stomachs still growled with hunger, we stepped lively.

Just outside town we ran into a milkman who was making deliveries to his customers. When

we saw the foaming white milk being poured out, our stomachs began to gnaw. My wife Ankje begged him for a little milk.

Although we could see that he felt sorry for us, he refused. There were hungry refugees everywhere you looked, and if he gave milk to one person without ration coupons, others would want some too.

She did not give up, however, and at last the man gave us a liter of milk for nothing. Since we had nothing to put it in, we took turns slurping greedily from the milkman's measuring cup. After we had all thanked the man, we took our places and were once again on our way toward Friesland. Because we had not had enough to eat, however, exhaustion began to creep up on us earlier in the afternoon.

The children began crying for something to eat, and we were ourselves weak with hunger. As we pushed on along the road through the Veluwe, we made a miserable little parade.

In the village of Ermelo, we spotted a bakery, and although we had no ration coupons, Ankje tried to buy some bread without them. Only after she had shed some tears, however, did the woman relent and give my wife a small piece of bread. We had never imagined we'd be reduced to begging. We divided the small piece into five, so we each had a small slice. But a little farther on, we spotted another bakery, and Ankje tried again, telling the baker our story. Here she succeeded in getting a half loaf of bread.

As we walked we eagerly chewed at our pieces of wartime bread, and it tasted wonderful even without butter or anything else on it.

As the day wore on, it was becoming colder, and we longed for a place to rest and to warm up. It was still early in the evening when we reached the first houses of Hardewijk. Here, too, many of the homes had been bombed or shot up.

Stopping a passer-by, we asked him if he

could direct us to the home of Poeltjesdijk. He was kind enough to offer to take us there. When we told him of our circumstances, he replied, "Oh, you're in good hands with the Poeltjesdijks. They won't turn you away. They are exceptionally kind people."

That was very encouraging to hear, so we rang the doorbell with high hopes. When I explained our situation, we were immediately welcomed inside. We soon found that we had come to the Promised Land, for it turned out that Mr. Poeltjesdijk was the owner of a large bakery. We quickly felt at home with these down-to-earth people. We were treated with great care and kindness, and given plenty of food and drink.

As we sat enjoying one another's company, a man entered who stared at us without saying a word, not even hello. We were told that the man was deaf and dumb. Once in a while we glanced at him in pity as he sat off by himself in a corner near the stove, but we did not give him further thought.

When the table was being set, we saw that it was a large family, for when everyone came in there was quite a crowd. While the rest made themselves sandwiches, we were served a warm meal of potatoes, kale and sausages. It was a meal we would never forget. We were fed until we could eat no more.

These people weren't just Christians in word but also in deed. They showed us care in every way they knew how.

When the children went off to bed, one of the little girls, a grandchild of the baker, went up

to the deaf and dumb man to wish him goodnight. To our surprise, we suddenly heard the man say goodnight in return. Our host noticed our surprise and told us in confidence that the man was only pretending to be deaf and dumb. He was actually a Russian soldier who had escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp. He had been hiding here for some time already. He had a job in town with a shoemaker, but his boss and the people in the village thought he was a deaf-and-dumb Dutchman. Since he didn't understand or speak very much Dutch, he didn't say anything further the rest of the evening.

We spent such a good evening together that even though we were physically exhausted, we were almost reluctant to go to bed. We were shown to a simple bedroom but with a deliciously soft bed.

Soon we were sleeping soundly and we heard nothing of the Germans and national guard who were quietly surrounding the house. Unknown to us, two English pilots were sleeping a few doors down the hall.

We did not learn that the house had been searched until the next morning at the breakfast table. Only then were we informed about the terrible danger that had threatened us during the night. Our host had, however, managed to lead the Germans down the garden path with all sorts of stories and they had left none the wiser.

Even our children were reluctant to leave that morning. They felt quite at home here. But it was a long hike to the next town of Balk. Our host gave us the name of someone in Elburg, where he said we could spend the night



Stationsstraat in the village of Ermelo, 1945

God's gift of guilt

Lynn Marie-Ittner Klammer

Jeremy was fifteen when I first saw him in the psychiatric unit of the hospital where I worked as a Psychology intern. He was tall, with the lankiness of a developing teen, but his face held the maturity of a young man, and his eyes the shrewd cynicism of someone who had already seen too much. The nurses referred to him as a lost cause, and I remember thinking what a waste of a young life this was.

As I reviewed his chart it became clear that Jeremy's story was a common one. Abused by his parents at a young age, he was "rescued" by the system and began his long journey from foster home to foster home. Again abused at his latest home, Jeremy had run away to forge a life for himself on the city streets. Not a mature decision perhaps, but to him certainly preferable to what he was suffering at the hands of his foster family.

I spoke with Jeremy at length about his life and hopes for the future. It soon became clear that he was well-mannered and intelligent beyond any of the other kids I had seen. Here was a young man, I thought, who really had a lot of potential. He didn't deserve to be confined to a psychiatric unit. I began to wonder who had victimized this boy the most, his parents, or us? We, well-meaning adults, had taken him from his home and placed him in an even worse home. When he tried to escape our good intentions, we locked him in a place full of unstable people where he could get "the help he needed." I couldn't help but wonder if what Jeremy really needed is for us to stop "helping" him. We seemed to be doing more harm than good.

Jeremy's only option was another foster care placement, but he didn't want to go, and I had to restrain myself from agreeing with him that life on his own sounded better. I know I would have felt that way were I in his shoes — his life experience had taught him nothing else.

Jeremy's treatment plan consisted of the usual group and individual therapy and daily visits from a tutor to help with school work, but the plan didn't address what he really needed. What Jeremy really needed was someone to truly care about him. We cared, but only enough to press Jeremy through

the cookie-cutter mold that we had developed for helping most kids so that we could place him back into the system that had already failed him. What Jeremy really needed was someone who cared enough to do whatever it took to give him a second chance at life.

I supposed at this point in such a story it's expected that the writer expound on how she did make a difference in Jeremy's life ... but I can't do that. I was just one of the many therapists who briefly saw Jeremy. I had only visited the adolescent unit that day to help out, and when I left I returned to my own caseload on the adult unit. I never saw Jeremy again and I certainly didn't care enough to make sure that he got what he needed. I can only pray that someone else did.

Though I never saw that angry, frightened boy again, a part of him has stayed with me these past sixteen years. I regret that I didn't do more — that I didn't even try. Since that day with Jeremy however, the memory has prompted me to not make the same mistake twice. I know that there are many like Jeremy who are simply pushed through the system by well-meaning people with little time to do more, but because of Jeremy's example, I try harder now, and care more. I choose to believe that God used my guilt over Jeremy to instill in me an ever-present awareness that each life is precious, with its own unique needs. Not having enough time, or feeling burdened with other priorities is not an excuse to let someone slip through the cracks.

My internship was a time of discovery for me as I applied my craft in a professional setting, but few discoveries affected me more than that intelligent young man trapped within the system. I completed my assignment that day, but I certainly didn't fulfill my greater mission in life. It seems that sometimes people are sacrificed along the way as we learn God's will. But are they really? Jeremy may never have received the help he needed. I'll never know. But he certainly helped me, and through me a lot of other patients. My failure with Jeremy led me to greater success with the others who followed, and my guilt became an ever-present reminder to never again neglect to care enough.

to go by way of Kampen. Shortly after the turn, the back wheel of the baby buggy came off for the second time. The long journey was putting too much stress on our equipment.

This time it took a lot of work to restore the wheel, but now pushing it was more difficult.

Because it was Sunday, all the cafés along the route were closed. It was getting colder, several degrees below freezing. We badly needed some place to warm up.

Not far from Kampen, we started toward a farm. A large German shepherd gave us an angry welcome, scaring the children so badly that they began to howl in fear.

The noise brought the farmer's wife to the window to ask what we wanted. Very politely we asked for something warm to drink.

She opened up and let us inside. At first we were only admitted as far as the large kitchen, which was not heated. There we were served a cup of hot milk. This tasted delicious to us. In the meantime, we had engaged the farmer and his wife in conversation, and they gradually came to trust us more. During this time, there were so many people scavenging along the roads who often plagued the farmers. Often their intentions were suspect so that it was little wonder that the farmers were very distrustful of strangers.

Once the ice had been broken, our host invited us into the living room, where we could warm up and rest. In the meantime, the farmer left to go to church in Kampen.

We left the farm about 2 p.m. It was not far to the city, but it was cold and it seemed like a long haul to us.

We were also very much aware that some very difficult obstacles still lay ahead. In fact, it was not out of the realm of possibilities that we might yet be prevented from completing our journey, for through the middle of Kampen ran the IJssel Line. It was closely guarded and hermetically closed to everyone.

Church

Muslim leaders push for Islamic law in Indonesia



Steven Nasta

JAKARTA (Compass) — In the wake of the May 28 bombing in Tentena, both Muslim and Christian leaders have expressed concern about corruption and violence in Indonesia. Some Muslim leaders say the bombing is yet another reason why Indonesia should adopt sharia, or Islamic law, to combat moral decline.

A key leader of Indonesia's largest Muslim group, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), recently said that since 214 of the 240 million people of Indonesia are Muslim, it makes sense to adopt sharia to govern every aspect of life.

To date, efforts to amend the 1945 Constitution to include sharia have failed. However, supporters of sharia are now using provincial laws as their entry point.

Provincial governments are increasingly using local bylaws — Peraturan Daerah or Perda — to introduce sharia principles. The easiest Perda to issue is the compulsory wearing of Muslim dress in government schools or offices, regardless of the person's religion. Muslim dress includes the baju koko for men and the jilbab and rok panjang (headscarf and long dress) for women.

Sixteen of 32 provinces in Indonesia have now implemented some form of sharia at the district level. The province of Aceh — and sometimes as the "Verandah of Mecca" — has formally adopted sharia. Under sharia, Muslim Acehnese are forbidden to attend churches or convert to Christianity.

Another province, West Sumatra, calls itself the "Verandah of Madina." Here, evangelism is forbidden and evangelists who violate that ruling can be sentenced

to imprisonment.

Muslim leaders on the island of Sulawesi, long affected by inter-religious violence, are also pushing for the implementation of sharia law.

In March, the Third Regional Congress of Muslims in Sulawesi was held in Bulukumba, 150 kilometers from Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi province.

A key agenda of the Sulawesi Congress was the implementation of sharia law. The Komite Persiapan Penerapan Syariah Islam di Sulawesi (KPPSI), or Preparation Committee to Implement Islamic Sharia in Sulawesi, was established several years ago to lay the groundwork for such legislation, and now holds the Congress once a year.

The KPPSI hopes sharia will be adopted in Sulawesi no later than 2008, according to Komintra, a Christian news agency based in Jakarta.

Komintra quoted Dr. H. Abdul Azis Qahhar Mudzakkar, a key leader of the KPPSI, who said the Congress had set a short-term target. "We hope that in one year, all districts and regions in South Sulawesi will pass local laws [based on sharia principles], as Bulukumba has done."

The city of Bulukumba is a good example of how sharia can be implemented gradually in many spheres of life. People entering the city are greeted by billboards saying, "Free Bulukumba from Al-Quran Illiteracy." The city is also in the process of implementing a dual economic system using zakat, infaz and sadaqah — the Muslim alternative to ordinary taxes — as a source of revenue.

The local government of Bulukumba also plans to adopt a sharia banking system to replace the

Listening to the Sudanese church in exile

Stephen Lazarus

This month a team and I traveled to Africa to visit with persecuted Sudanese Christians in Kakuma — the United Nations (UN) refugee camp in remote northern Kenya that shelters nearly 100,000 displaced Africans from war-torn countries. We listened, taught, encouraged, and were amazed by the perseverance of the Sudanese and by their examples of faith under fire.

The Sudanese have suffered much. Sudan's 22-year genocidal civil war between the Arab and Islamic north and the African, Christian and animist south has killed more than two million people and created more than four million refugees (not counting the current genocide in Darfur). Everyone I spoke with had lost family members and friends.

They had harrowing stories of survival. Many told how government militias bombed their villages and led violent campaigns of rape and murder against civilians. One particularly devious tactic used by the government in Khartoum was to kidnap young African boys and force them into the Islamic army to fight against their own people in the south. Southern Sudanese either had to kill their own children or be killed by them. In either case, the government's policy of ethnic cleansing advanced.

Yet, it is striking just how normal life in Kakuma refugee camp is. Food distribution occurs twice per month, thanks to the UN's World Food Program. Children play and laugh with broad smiles, surprised to see white visitors from afar. Refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, and the Congo live in separate zones in the camp. They marry, go to school, worship their gods, raise up children, and run businesses (including a tent in the Somali section offering high-speed internet access). They dream of going home.

Faith and religion are woven into the patterns of daily life for the refugees. We were awakened each morning well before dawn by loudspeakers echoing out the Muslim call to prayer. On Sunday we joined Christians of the Dinka tribe singing and dancing at a Holy Communion service outside under the hot African sun. We met two esteemed women elders whose ministry has helped fuel the explosive growth of Christianity among the Dinka in the Bor region. Refugees shared how their faith has kept them from committing suicide in moments when they were

tempted to despair.

Non-governmental organizations such as Lutheran World Federation, Jesuit Relief Services, and Kenya's National Council of Churches assist in most details of the camp's operations.

Refugee faith can also have a sharp political edge to it. Displaced people have suffered the grave injustice of having their own governments turn on them in violence. Refugees have seen governments do unspeakable evils and they yearn deeply for peace, security, and stable societies. During a community discussion I led on justice as a biblical idea, members of the Dinka tribe reflected on the meaning of their suffering and shared their hopes and dreams for a new Sudan. They said that in their time of greatest need they often felt abandoned and forgotten by the nations of the world. One elderly Sudanese church leader told us she could never understand how America could ignore the suffering, disease and poverty of her people, because she has heard that America has many Christians and the resources to travel to the moon.

In his song "Crumbs from Your Table," Africa activist and rock star Bono of U2 sings, "Where you live should not decide whether you live or whether you die." I left Africa deeply convicted of that truth. Leaders thanked us for coming and said our presence gave them hope. They asked us to thank the church in America for speaking out on their behalf and for challenging the Bush Administration and the international community to hold Sudan's leaders accountable. America has been given much. To those whom much is given, from them will much be expected.

Stephen Lazarus is Director of Civitas Programs for Leadership in Faith and Public Affairs.

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conventional banking system. This is the traditional Muslim way of handling finances; but it leaves few options for people of other faiths.

'Jakarta Declaration'

Another Congress of Indonesian Muslims, the Kongres Umat Islam Indonesi, held in April 2004 in

Jakarta, recommended that sharia law be adopted as the ultimate solution for Indonesia's problems.

The Congress drew up a 14-point resolution, called the "Jakarta Declaration." The declaration recommended adopting a dual economic system, both conventional and sharia-based, throughout

Indonesia. Every bank in the country has now been encouraged to develop sharia banking services.

The Congress also asked the government to revise Indonesia's criminal to reflect sharia law.

To speed up this process, a bill was drafted by a committee

See *Indonesia* p. 9...

Church

Christian lecturer in Nigeria disappears after death threat

Obed Minchakpu

ZARIA, Nigeria (Compass) – Andrew Akume, a Christian lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria city, Kaduna state, northern Nigeria, has disappeared since the issuance of a death sentence against him. A militant Muslim group at ABU passed the sentence on him claiming he blasphemed Mohammed, the prophet of Islam.

The death sentence for Akume, the university's dean of the faculty of law, is contained in two fatwas (Islamic decrees) issued in the months of May and June by the "Concerned Muslims Movement" of ABU. In a circular entitled "Fatwa: The Resolutions," distributed on the university campus, Akume was accused of "assault on Muslim sisters and blasphemy against Allah and Islam."

Christians forced to wear Islamic dress

Meanwhile in Kano state, Christians are being held to Islamic law in the way they dress. On May 16 at a Muslim forum in the city of Kano, Governor Malam Ibrahim Shekarau ordered that all Christians in the state must dress in accordance with Islamic tenets. The order was sent to Christian churches and institutions in the state.

Shekarau said, "All Christians in Kano are henceforth prohibited from dressing the way they like. Their dressing must reflect the

Akume asked a Muslim female student not to wear the hijab (head-to-toe covering) because it hid the identity of the student from lecturers and students. According to Akume, the student disregarded the Council for Legal Education's dress code for law students by wearing the Islamic dress.

The second fatwa issued said, "Our earlier fatwa holds, and it is a time bomb which will explode in a few days' time." The circular, which contained no dates or names, accused Akume of blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed and of making the faculty of law at the university a "hell for Muslims."

Shortly before his disappearance, Akume submitted a petition to the authorities of ABU denying the accusations made against him by the militant Muslim group. According to the Christian lecturer, he harbors no ill-feelings

against Muslim students and he never assaulted any of them.

"I was only trying to live up to my responsibility as the dean of the faculty of law by enforcing the dress code for law students prescribed by the Council of Legal Education in Nigeria and approved by Nigerian universities' law faculties. The dress code instructed that only approved dresses be used by law students. Veils and religious dresses were not approved for these students," Akume stated in his petition.

The Rev. Eugene Ogu, chairman of the Pentecostal arm of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Rivers state, Nigeria, told Compass, "A situation whereby government and security agencies turn blind eyes and ears to the persecution of Christians in northern Nigeria is not acceptable to the Christian leadership in this country."

culture and religion of Islam."

According to the governor, the implementation of the dress code will start in schools across the state immediately, then be extended to everyone. Such dress approved for women by the government, he said, include head coverings and long flowing robes that cover from head to toe. Some of the schools have already enforced the Islamic dress code.

The Rt. Rev. Zakka Nyam, the Anglican Bishop of Kano, has accused the state government

of persecuting Christians. In an interview with Compass in Kano city, Nyam said Christians in the state have been denied land to build churches, made to imbibe Islamic culture, and at various times have been killed and their churches destroyed.

"Religious discrimination still takes prominence here in Kano. We are being persecuted and deprived of places of worship in Kano state, despite the fact that we, Christians, have been living in peace with the Muslims," Nyam explained.

Central Sulawesi lost 51. These are the still the areas most wracked by inter-religious conflict today.

In West Java, it is very difficult to build new churches or obtain permits to use existing buildings for Christian worship. West Java was the center of the Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII or Islamic State/Islamic Indonesia Army) rebellion, which began in 1950 and lasted for about 12 years. Strong Islamic views are still prominent in the region, and as a result, less tolerance is shown to churches.

Law No. 20/1999, which sets guidelines for regional autonomy, granted governors and mayors the power to close down churches.

Christians also need official permits before they can build churches or worship in rented facilities. However, the government

Christian students file suit against Nigerian University

JOS, Nigeria (Compass) – Three students expelled for sharing the gospel in November last year say their fundamental rights as Christians were violated by the authorities of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi, northern Nigeria. The three filed a case against the university, claiming the expulsion was a gross violation of their fundamental rights as Christians.



Abraham Adamu Misal

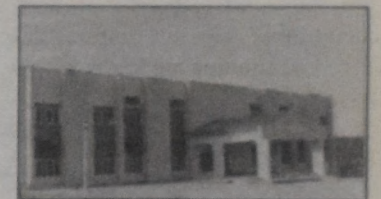
According to the student's lawyer, Emmanuel Danboyi, the university's disciplinary committee which investigated the case was biased because it had 10 Muslims and only one Christian on the committee. Danboyi asked the court to declare the recommendation of the disciplinary committee "null, void and of no effect." The Christian students are also asking the court to set aside their expulsion from the university.

According to Danboyi, the

disciplinary committee was heavily weighted with Muslims, it wrongly accused the Christian students of blasphemy against the prophet of Islam, Mohammed, and created a situation in which the Christian students were expelled from the university and a death sentence passed on them by the Muslims in the institution.

"The Muslim members of the disciplinary committee who constituted a majority were biased and unfair in their investigation in that they acted as accusers, prosecutors and judges in the matter in which members openly showed interest," the lawyer to the Christian students told the court.

After Alkali, Misal, and Solomon were expelled, Muslim students attacked Christian students at the university and murdered a Christian student leader on December 8, 2004. ATBU was closed. In January, Muslim militants pronounced a death sentence on the expelled students, and the families of Alkali and Misal were attacked on January 26. ATBU re-opened on February 28 under tight security and without meeting the demands of Christian leaders who sought to reinstate the expelled Christians.



Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University

Indonesia ... continued from p. 8 and presented to parliament. Professor Dr. Muladi, who chaired the committee, acknowledged that some sharia principles were included, and said the new bill was designed as a tool for "social engineering" to improve society.

Many Christian leaders believe it is only a matter of time before President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono signs the bill into law. The bill has had a remarkably low profile in its passage through parliament, keeping public discussion and objection to a minimum.

The Congress also suggested changes in religious education, as mandated by the National Education System Law No. 20/2003, which made it compulsory for all religious schools to provide religious education for students of other faiths.

Under this law, Christian schools with a certain quota of Muslim students were required to provide Muslim worship facilities and an appropriate religious instructor.

However, some schools have yet to implement the required changes.

Restrictions on Christian worship

Meanwhile, churches are still being destroyed or forced to close. A total of 966 churches have been burned or closed down since 1945, six of those since current President Yudhoyono was elected seven months ago.

The highest number of church closures or burnings occurred in the Maluku – a total of 180; followed by West Java, which lost 132 churches. East Java lost 91, while

of West Java has granted permits to just four percent of the 1,965 congregations in the province, leaving the remaining 96 percent vulnerable to closure at any time.

Christians divided

The situation is not helped by a lack of unity among Christians. For example, a Letter of Decision issued by the governor of West Java dictates that a church can only be built if there are a minimum of 20 Christian families living in the neighborhood.

The requirement for a minimum of 20 families has led to "sheep-stealing," where pastors try to attract people from other churches in order to build up their own congregations as a precursor to applying for a building permit.

Because of this, churches are unwilling or unable to offer a joint

protest against discriminatory laws and practices in the province.

In contrast, several groups have already formed to protect and promote Muslim values in West Java. These include the Gerakan Anti-Pemurtadan, or Anti-Proselytism Movement; the Persis or Muslim Brotherhood, and the Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Front).

A prominent Christian leader in West Java, who declined to be named, said some Christians were their own worst enemies.

"Many of our Christians don't live in accordance with Jesus' teachings," he said. "They don't behave as light or salt. Many of them are involved in criminal gangs or become thugs. This has to change if we want to maintain a place for Christianity in Indonesia."

60th Anniversary

Christian citizenship in a new country and mental illness



The March 21, 1958 issue of *CC* carried two huge political ads — 3/4 page featuring Lester B. Pearson for the Liberals and an even larger one for John G. Diefenbaker, both in Dutch. Elections were scheduled for March 31. Although *CC* regularly carried articles at this time calling for principled Christian political action, there are no articles that discuss the central issues in the Canadian elections or that look at the platforms of the major parties. The writers all stay on the level of abstract principles and preach the claims of Christ's kingdom on every part of life. In the issues following the election, you cannot even tell from reading *CC* who won or even that there was an election.

Yet, this was the year that Diefenbaker led the Progressive Conservative Party from a minority government to a landslide victory over Pearson, who won the respect of Canadians for his work in the U.N.

I don't know whether the lack of particulars was because no one yet felt competent to comment or because Reformed leaders at this time felt equally distant from both parties.

One article does warn that "Canadian vote laws have teeth". Some extremely partisan folks in Montreal were sentenced to six months in jail for ballot-box stuffing. The article warns that the law prohibits wearing campaign buttons two days before elections and selling booze on election day. Were the editors of *CC* worried some readers were getting too enthusiastic about their candidates? Or perhaps they were recalling some heated campaigns for the Antirevolutionary Party back in the old country?



In an article on Christian responsibility in labor relations, Dave Valstar quotes Hendrik van Riessen, something worth hearing again:

"It is strange that many Christians discover but one theme in the Bible — the social question and the call to social justice. This does play a large role in both the Old and New Testaments; yet, it is but one of many themes and a secondary one. The Bible does not address social injustice in and of itself. The Bible sees it as the consequence of a deeper evil, which is the source of all evil, namely, that we no longer fear God, no longer keep his commandments and instead bow before idols (the self or society nowadays). This is where life becomes derailed. This is the origin of humanism. This turns an employer into a capitalist. This is the source of social crises and the reason socialism cannot solve them.

"Anyone who puts human relationships on the same level as our relationship with God, or separates the one from the other, shows that his outlook has been infected by humanism."

Valstar adds: "We do not label Christian social and political action as evangelism; however, insofar as we are faithful to our mandate to call all of life to be obedient to the law of God, it is evangelical in character."

[Richard Mouw did write a book titled *Political Evangelism* many years ago. I recall a political action group led by Gordon Spykman heatedly disputing the propriety of the title.]

Valstar also quotes T.P. vander Kooy: "The calling of the Christian cannot be to stand off to one side and utter negative critique. Nor can it be to leave the field of battle to

seek to build a Christian culture or a Christian community off by oneself. Both postures boil down to an admission of defeat. But after Christ's resurrection, the victory of the Christian principle is not only assured but a fact."

That neo-Kuyperian generation has often been accused of triumphalism, but to point to Christ's triumph over the power of evil and idolatry can hardly be called triumphalism. That is precisely to point away from any attempt by humanity to seek to triumph by his own strength and reason.

From *CC* March 14, 1958: Ontario's Travel and Publicity Minister sent 2,000 trees as a gift to the Netherlands to plant in a newly drained part of the IJsselmeer.

From *CC* March 7, 1958: A large announcement of the launch of a new publication: *Vision: the Journal for the Historic Christian Faith*, with Revs. R. Wildschut and Gordon J. Spykman as editors. The magazine was supposed to be aimed at reaching unchurched Canadians or "those who have become alienated from the truth." Subscriptions cost \$2.00 per year, or \$1.50 if you were sending it to someone else.

Although nowadays we may be sceptical about reaching people by offering them a magazine, you have to admire the effort. Perhaps one of our readers can tell us how long the magazine was in circulation.

An article on "artificial insemination" or what today would be called fertility treatment for infertile couples who don't want to adopt sounds almost current. As I was reading it, a news broadcast tells me that a referendum on the issue in Italy has failed to liberalize the laws there. Such methods of having children were condemned by the Catholic Church in 1958 as well as by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Anglicans have changed their minds by now but not the Vatican.

The issue of mental illness among immigrants, Jac. Geuzebroek informs us in a series of articles launched in *CC* in February of 1958, was being studied by the classes of Ontario. The question addressed was "Is this a responsibility of the church?" And the classes replied with a unanimous Yes.

Geuzebroek cites an article in a recent issue of *MacLean's* referring to studies that show that mental illness among immigrants was considerably higher than in the general population. Geuzebroek breathes a sigh of relief that the article lays to rest the myth that the level of criminality is also higher among immigrants. [Surely, no one ever thought that of Dutch immigrants! Sheesh! We were the first in our neighborhood to cut our grass before it was two feet tall. We were model citizens!]

Nevertheless, the *MacLean's* article drew strong protests from immigrants. They didn't want to be depicted as prone to mental illness. "Why is this so?" asked Geuzebroek. Suppose the magazine had reported that there was a higher rate of stomach problems among immigrants, would that have raised an outcry? No, because there is no stigma attached as there is to mental illness. Physical illness is acceptable but not mental illness. Yet, Geuzebroek points out, many physical illnesses actually have psychological origins.

We need a better understanding of the unity of man. Both body and mind play a role in illness.

The *Maclean's* article cites a Canada wide study that found the rate of mental illness among immigrants to be 10 percent higher than the average. Two province wide studies found even higher rates — 20 percent higher than the average in Manitoba and 40 percent higher than average in Ontario. [I conclude from the statistics that the farther west you went in Canada, the less likely you were to suffer from mental illness. But Geuzebroek didn't jump to such conclusions.]

The most obvious causes of mental illness among immigrants were loneliness, unemployment and the stresses of adjusting to a different land and culture. Geuzebroek surmised that the rate among Dutch immigrants is probably lower but that it was probably above average as well.

It's a good thing that the churches are giving the matter attention, comments Geuzebroek. It is important to address mental health not just when people are on the point of needing admission but well before.

Look around, he suggests: are there those who are always complaining, always irritated, always belligerent, whining and discour-

aged? Many among us face life as if it is a great burden weighing us down. They complain about the Canadians, the church, the lazy neighbors and the minister. [Geuzebroek seems to be saying that these are signs of mental illness. If so, I'd say that he's wrong about lower rates among the Dutch. I'd estimate it to be some 75 percent higher than average. Of course, most of our Canadian neighbors didn't have a minister and a church to complain about.]

Geuzebroek tells *CC* readers that when he was about to emigrate to Canada from Amsterdam, where he was ministering to the sick, his pastor told him: "The Lord has told us to take special care of the sick, the prisoner and the stranger. You've ministered to the sick; now you're going to be ministering to the stranger."

By the stranger he meant the Dutch immigrants settling in Canada, explained Geuzebroek, adding: "I know most of you don't think of yourselves as strangers anymore. But the first generation will remain strangers here more or less till the day they die. Not until the third generation will that change. Only your grandchildren, he said, will no longer feel that inner rift and frustration, that vague longing for certain things in the past.

One of the results of this inner rift, he says, may be mental illness — and also family tensions between parents and children.

But perhaps those tensions weren't all bad. In fact, maybe we should never feel ourselves entirely at home here. Maybe that element of estrangement has provided a spur to much good work.

In two articles published under the title "The secret and the beauty of Christian learning" in *CC* in December of 1965, the late Remkes Kooistra outlined a speech he delivered to students at Carlton University. It draws on the speeches he gave the year before at the Unionville Study Conference and published later as "The university and its abolitions."

Kooistra shared with the readers of *CC* that he explained that just like everyone else the scientist or scholar makes the fundamental decisions not in his mind but in his heart. Before he begins his work, he has already chosen a direction — either for or against God.

Even agnosticism is a dogmatic
See Kooistra p. 14...

JUNE 27, 2005

Poetry



Worshipping God in a New Place

They came to a land where the chinook-arched sky already bowed over a wooden church built on prairie grass far from the spires and steeples of their former places of worship.

They wanted to pass on to their children the fear of the Lord, the compassion, the comfort as they confronted the realities of life in this treeless windswept country.

They turned their wagon in the direction of the church each Sunday where their ears and hearts heard nuances of the love of God, in the language of their fathers; taught their children the long version of the Heidelberg Catechism, also in the tongue of their fathers for many years until the church community became comfortable with the English of their adopted country.

Travelling to church, their faces felt the soft wind and balmy warmth beneath that wide blue sky, ears caught the chirp of meadowlarks marking the spring, knew the howl and bite of winds that grabbed at their hats and scarves, driving the dust or snow in whirling storms of grit or swirling flurries; and were challenged by the mud of spring rain and banks of wind packed snow.

Their belief in God, the source of their strength, so strong that the elements of nature had to be severe in order to deter them from worshipping together.



A Grandfather's Legacy of Faith

when you left your first built house on the rich Wisconsin soil land still covered by huge trees land needing to be cleared and came to these open spaces ready for the cut of the plough you anticipated the joy of harvests and met instead the changing face of the prairie the first year understanding the land through severe drought the next year experiencing the violence of a hailstorm that roared through the countryside like a locomotive bellowing over a bridge

forgetting the trials of these years when timely rains visited the land and the harvests were bountiful years few and far between filled with the graces of greening that drew your roots farther into this land a land where you called many things a blessing served seventeen consecutive years on church council read many sermons in church and at home on winter Sunday mornings when there was only an afternoon service a reminiscing neighbour remembered you as a shy, husky man quieter than your jovial bachelor brother Rev. Harm and though your formal schooling was a short-lived thing you never quit learning liked to read James Fenimore Cooper and the church papers De Wachter and Grondwet

you liked your tobacco even in the lean years liked potatoes with homemade mustard or 'spek vet' (bacon drippings) cooked lettuce red cabbage sauerkraut and pickled herring that came in a small wooden barrel

you died before I was born yet your legacy of life and faith has been passed on to me a blessing to celebrate as we commemorate 100 years of God's faithfulness



Dad's Great Uncle Jacob 1835-1926

they couldn't capture Uncle Jacob in a gelled photograph

image making he considered it a sin but there were word pictures of him that escaped the confines of his religious propriety which great nephews carried into the next generation in the twinkle in their eyes

remembering youthful pranks stories only told once and then somehow selectively forgotten

of syrup on the outhouse seat before his nightly ritual or flashing flares of light behind the biffy

he shared their home for five years before he died the elder brother of their grandmother

each acquiring a downstairs bedroom when they arrived accomodating being the household word an institution not being an option

the rest of the family slept in the small upstairs father mother eight children from twenty-year-old Betty to baby John

at seventy-five grandmother did not work she sat in the chair all day every day too stiff from rheumatism to climb into the buggy to go to church she sometimes read her brother's books

he was eighty-five his balding head always capped except for prayer eyes behind tiny wire-rim glasses perceiving a stern world of judgment

even judgment on grandmother for not having a vision or some experience to prove she was "saved" besides she'd had her photo taken with the grandchildren

at first he read his theological books but in the last five months of his life even his reality failed him his sister had died the country was dried out winds hot crops burnt

how many times did he throw his plate at the table china crashing on the hard floor or caught gleefully by one of the teen-aged boys till he was given a tin one?

this one he never threw

Meditation

Words, mystery, baptism and community



A Meditation based on 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Rev. Bill Versteeg

"Listen, I tell you a mystery!" (1 Corinthians 15:51) Paul said. Then he talked about something enduring, eternal, about seeds that must die in order to rise to new life and death's defeat.

A mystery is like this picture. We see treetops, but there is so much hidden, unseen, undefined yet real, in fact the foundation of every standing tree is hidden in the mist. It is almost eerie, so we come up with the word "myst-ery."

"Listen, I tell you 'my-story'" God says. But to us, his 'my-story' is mystery and it takes millennia to tell. It's a story of one Word spoken into the void that endures forever while all things fade away. One Word, the substance of all reality – for by this one Word all reality came into being. The story of that one Word is the drama still being played today.

Our congregation just experienced a sudden shocking death of a young person. We were arrested by mystery. As Carlos Castaneda said in *Journey to Ixtlan*, "The world must be brought to a stop ... otherwise it cannot be seen with different eyes." We experienced that. Death brought our world to a stop.

Memories spoken richly expressed the void we felt. Hope voiced our hunger and longing for reunion. We saw with different eyes. A funeral became a resurrection. Our emptiness became an expression of our fullness.

If these words are unclear, poorly defined, confusingly expressed, it is because they are words of mystery, where we recognize that so terribly much of Truth is in what we do

not see, and cannot "explain," or "make flat." We sometimes journey through mountains and valleys and the eerie mists hang over the richest parts of our existence. The mystery is that in having our world come to a grinding halt, we have discovered in our shared story, in our puddles of tears together a deeper truth about community, for even though each of us is a person, we are united, we are one, one in our grief, one in our story, one in our words, one in our love.

Though most of the time we just see individual treetops, there is so much more, the unseen community ecosystem with its symbiotic relationships – all expressions of the one Word. There is so much mystery to community.

"Listen, I tell you a mystery" scripture proclaims. Mystery that has to do with baptism, community and the Word.

Paul talks about the forefathers who were under the cloud, wrapped in mystery, we see some that stand out, Moses, Aaron, but under the mist are thousands of those who walked through the sea, a community together, baptized into Moses.

What strange terminology – "baptized into Moses." It all started with a few powerful divine "I am who I am" words spoken through Moses: "Let my people go!" With nation-destroying power this Word spoke, the waters divided in front of them, the children of Israel, from grandfathers to babies unborn were baptized as they traveled between the Red Sea's cascading walls of water. In their baptism they entered into the mysterious.

As our eyes open under water give blurred vision, so too, Israel started their journey under the cloud, where so much was unseen, where steps taken had to be taken by faith. They

embrace mystery in the 'mist' had their bodies scattered, making the desert a truly 'eerie' place. "Their days were like grass, the wind blew over it, they were gone, remembered no more. But the Word of the Lord..."

Once again we are pushed back to mystery for their failure is not the whole story. Paul tells us that even in their failure, even in their 'not finishing well,' they all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Listen, I tell you a mystery. In this telling, truth is real, but hard to define. We would love clarity, but what is needed is faith. Our minds are pushed into hazy rifts where we don't often travel. Our hearts can only be amazed.

Paul talks about eating from Christ, God's Word. They all, from the little child to the elderly father of many, ate and drank the same spiritual food, even though so many did not finish well. They were fed by words, words that formed story, words that told the divine drama. From early morning when they got up to late at night, words fed them.

In their festivals by divine command, they enacted these words. In celebrations of thanks they danced the words. They ate and drank and made merry with the words. "You shall not live by bread alone, but every word..." These words were tasty, good for eating. "Come, taste and see..." and so they ate and drank.

Listen, I tell you a mystery. Even as they ate and drank the Word, the Christ, that same Word became them. The simple truth is, as we say, "You are what you eat." Their existence was an expression of the Word that accompanied them. They were temporal expressions of an eternal Word.

were Baptized into Moses and going somewhere. It was called a land of promise, a land of the forefathers 400 years earlier, a land which the Word said belonged to them. But their pathway led behind the pillar through the cloud of mystery in a desert where roads were not marked and maps were not drawn.

Humans, however, don't tolerate mystery well. Mystery demands faith, conviction of things not seen. Soon the people of Israel demanded "Give us clarity!" "Give us a road map!" "Give us a destination so that we know how long this journey is going to take!" "We want to know when, where and how!"

Humans don't tolerate mystery well. To have clarity, to see the next step is to have control over the journey. We like the myth that we are in control, that we determine our own destiny. The people of Israel, in their desire to master their fate, turned to a god that they could see, make, define, and they worshiped it, hoping that it would remove the unseen, the cloud, the mystery. They gave themselves to sex, at least that was "a losing control" that was under their control, a 'controllable mystery.' Some doubted the reality behind the mystery, they tested the Lord, the Word at work.

Others grumbled: "Give us something clear!" These did not finish well. Those who could not

Stewardship

Even as you read these words about mystery, they appear, and as quickly as your mind hears them, they disappear. They are a temporal expression of a deeper meaning. The meaning, the reality, the essence, the Word continues though the sound has long disappeared.

"Their days were like grass, the wind blew over it, they were gone, remembered no more. But the Word of the Lord stands forever."

The surprise of this passage, a surprise especially to us who love clarity and self determination, is that it was not those who made the choice to enter into the sea and be baptized into Moses that finished well. Rather it was those who in their infancy, in their youth, those dragged along and carried, those whose destiny was determined for them, those who could do no other, they were the ones who entered the land of promise, they were the ones who finished well.

The Word stands forever. At times in life, we are forced to stop. We have had the opportunity to see the world with different eyes. We might even sense the power of mystery and the wonder of the unseen in community. Here in the mysterious valley of the shadow, with care, we take steps of faith.

But the wonder of it all, is that we also are eating and drinking words, story, redemption's drama, and even as we do, that story becomes us. "It is not that I live," Paul would say, "it is Christ (the Word) in me, the hope of glory." Baptized into Christ, we become temporal expressions of the eternal creative Word, and every step we take is wrapped in mystery.

I will never forget a mother, her arthritic hands deformed into nothing but knuckles, raising her fist and crying out, "Hij is gedoopt! Hij is gedoopt!"

At the time I was not sure if her fisted cry "He was baptized!" was not more than a misunderstanding of baptism, an expression of anger at God, or words of desperate hope that God, whose Word writes mystery, was making sure his Word would not return to him void.

She was crying for her son who had been a normal young teenager, faithful in coming to church, faithful in hearing the story, the Word, but then he got into the wrong crowd. Quickly he was trapped by the anesthetizing lure of alcohol, and his life went from bad to worse. Most regarded him as a lost cause except his mother.

With his wife, who wisely left him, he bore two children both of whom hated him. His and their dysfunction was so deep that his own son, in anger stabbed him with a knife, severing important nerves to his left side, disabling his arm completely and hindering his ability to work or walk from then on. I even called crime stoppers on him in the hope of curbing his drinking and driving. He had swindled pension money from his own mother.

"Hij is gedoopt!" his mothers trembling fist cried.

My connecting with him was sparse until the week he entered the hospital, his body a skeleton, his grizzled chin jaundiced, his belly bloated, his cirrhotic liver failed.

In the hospital I experienced mystery. I talked about God, he talked about talking to God. Words, family words, storied community words heard when he was young were words that, even in all of his brokenness, resonated through the emptiness of his fractured heart.

The Word he had eaten and the Word he drank while young had become part of him, and that same Word accomplished its purpose; he talked to God. I buried him with the grace filled words of Isaiah 42: 3 "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out."

Listen, I will tell you a mystery. We were baptized, into a community, into a Savior, into the Word, the living enduring Word of God. And we are called to finish well.

Recreation: Connecting with God

Have you ever taken a vacation through the Canadian Rockies? Aren't they overwhelming? Doesn't their grandeur make you feel small – insignificant? Don't they make you, in wonder and awe, praise the Creator?

Taking time out to smell the roses should be a daily thing but even more so when we are on vacation. God reveals himself by both his written word (special revelation) as well as his creation (general revelation). God the Creator took time out at the end of each cycle (day) of creation and stood back and said that it was good. We too should take time out each day but especially when we take time off for a vacation.

When it comes to R&R (rest and recreation) we need to be good stewards of our time and resources. That makes it sound like we have to work at having R&R. Yes, it is work – important work. It can also be a time of competing expectations among family members. These expectations can drive us to pack in too much at the cost of opportunities to grow in our relationships with each other and with God. It is important that in our R&R we factor in times and the venues that help us to be drawn closer to each other and in greater awe of our Creator God. In your vacation plans have you planned in the time to reflect and pray?

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. Luke 10: 40-42 (NIV)

I remember vacation times with my family to be happy times as a child. Times enjoyed with my parents, brothers and sister on a beach or on the water, camping, fishing, swimming, or at the cottage. Vacations are memory-making times and important for relationship building.

But I've also experienced vacations that were just a lot of work with tight schedules and much busyness setting up camp, taking down camp, driving long days and antsy young kids often intoning the refrain: "Are we there yet?" Don't let our "Martha" tendencies spoil precious times to build relationships with each other and the Lord. Vacations are the times my children remember with fondness – times when they could have quality time with Dad and Mom. The stories of stormy nights when camping are fondly remember – times remembered for our dependence on each other and God.

A good steward must also consider the

But the wonderful reality is that even in our all too often failing journeys, we eat that same spiritual food and drink that same spiritual drink and the Word becomes us... "It is not I but Christ..."

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Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

cost of recreation in order to keep a healthy balance, especially to ensure that the 'first-fruits' don't ever get compromised. Are we spending more on our recreation and vacations then we do for the kingdom? It speaks volumes about our priorities. At no time can we afford to be 'stingy' about the work of the kingdom.

It is my prayer that each of us may really enjoy in our times of recreation – times of relationship building with each other and the Lord. Take time to be a "Mary" and stand in awe when you take in a majestic sight, whether at the foot of a mountain or another spectacular vista. Then raise your eyes and thoughts heavenward and give praise to the Creator!

Stewardly Tip: Just prior to important events in Christ's earthly ministry Jesus sought out a quiet place to pray: at the beginning of his ministry, before he selected the 12 disciples, when his disciples returned from their 'missionary' experience and just prior to his being arrested on the eve of his crucifixion. Make it a daily practice to find a quiet place to pray (busy people: make it an appointment with God at the same time each day in your day timer or PDA), but also for those special times prior to making important decisions. It takes discipline and it helps to have a supportive spouse to help guard your special time of R&R with God.

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Environmental Stewardship: The case for sustainability

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Ecclesiastes

Stand fast unto death

A. A. van Ruler

I also thought, "As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3:18-21

With these words, the Preacher does not, by all indications, wish to raise the question of the relationship between humans and animals for its own sake. Nor does he want to reflect on the problem posed by the fact of death. Both death and the common fate of humans and animals in death are raised in the context of much broader questions.

The writer is still occupied with the problem of injustice. The shocking amount of injustice between individuals and between groups of people is an undeniable fact. In the face of such injustice we may cling to the promise that all injustice shall at some time be punished and eliminated, for there is an appointed time for every concern and every task, for injustice and for justice. But this

Kooistra ...continued from p. 10

faith because it rejects the truth of Christ.

Kooistra emphasized to the students that it is a great privilege to study the world in the light of the Word. The students who came to the lecture, said Kooistra, demonstrated a deep interest in what he said and wanted to hear more. It is not just a little group of us Calvinists who are interested in Christian learning. An hour after the lecture was over, he said, hardly any of the students had left; they were still asking questions.

Sometimes, said Kooistra, he got the impression that at the universities the professors were more set against Christian scholarship than the students.

We as Calvinists, he suggested, don't appreciate enough the riches that we have received. We take them for granted.

He went on to tell about various Christian students that he'd encountered at the universities who

also means that whole periods of time pass by in which injustice goes unpunished. A great deal of human life runs aground on that fact. Then it looks as if all human toil and effort run dead in the desert of futility.

The Preacher goes a little deeper into this question. He asks himself why the Lord God has arranged things so unsatisfactorily. He answers: in this way God sifts and tests us. Will we succumb to injustice? Will we give up the hope that some day justice will be served? Will we despair of the meaningfulness and goodness of the world? Yes, will we perhaps even participate in its injustice?

Or in the middle of all the injustice that he suffers and observes will we keep trying to do what is just—because it is just? If so, this will give encouragement to the world, and in spite of everything we will be able to keep living in hope. But this also means that we must continue to believe and not fall into unbelief—right to the very end.

The tremendous amount of injustice in the world is a radical test for mankind, especially the fact that it goes on unpunished for so long. But the Preacher brings yet another consideration into play. The Lord God does not just want to test us; he also wants us to begin to see our own insignificance. We must begin to honor God in all his greatness and

considered science and scholarship as a threat to the Christian faith or as wholly divorced from it. For them to hear that it is not a worldly occupation belonging to the Egyptians and the Greeks but that it can be part of serving God filled them with excitement and eagerness to know more.

The goal of all learning and knowledge is wisdom, he told them. And when reason presumes to attain wisdom apart from God, it loses it. It is Christ, the wisdom of God, who is the touchstone for human wisdom.

Kooistra expressed gratitude for the existence of an Association for Reformed Christian Studies (I guess it wasn't the AACS yet), but he warned that such an organization must be welcoming for all those with an interest in Christian scholarship. It must never become a closed society where you have to pass through a maze to get in.

majesty. To this end, we must begin to realize that the existence of justice in this world is not something to be taken for granted. It is what gives existence meaning and what makes being good.

Where do we get the nerve to suppose that we may take all this for granted and that we have a right to it? Created reality has no meaning in and of itself, does it? For it is neither rational nor necessary. It endures entirely by the sovereign freedom and the good pleasure of our Creator. It could also have not existed.

If it does all have meaning and purpose, this is because God was so kind as to not only call things into being but also to endow them with a goal. We creatures need to be reminded of that. We must begin to respect God, and we must also begin to recognize our own insignificance.

The Preacher puts it into these words: man must begin to see that, taken in himself, he is really nothing more than an animal. In the last century, Christians become tremendously agitated about Darwin's idea that man is descended from the ape. I honestly have never been able to understand that agitation. We should have known better from the Bible. There man is presented entirely within the boundaries of creatureliness right alongside all other creatures.

We should not distance our-

Its purpose must be to wake up all the people.

All his life Remkes Kooistra was a holist in his promotion of the kingship of God in the whole of human life, urging us also to integrate the life of the mind in our total service to God and translating the fruits of Christian scholarship to the rest of us. He was a frequent contributor to CC as well, continuing to send articles even in the last year of his life at Holland Christian Homes.

Ironically, the last article I had to reject. It was about the thought of the philosopher Spinoza, a Dutch Jew. Sorry, Remkes, I replied: it's too difficult for most CC readers. Well into his 80s, Remkes was still turned on by the beauty of Christian learning, and now he is beholding the source and the sum of that beauty face to face.



selves so completely from the animals or exalt ourselves to high above them. In fact, the Scriptures are even more radical than Darwin. They not only say that man is a fine looking ape but also that he is a lump of clay dug from the earth. He is dust from dust and to dust he will return.

This is the point the Preacher wants to make in identifying man with the animals: "Man's fate is like that of the animals: the same fate awaits them both." The Dutch theologian Isaac van Dijk called this the logic of the graveyard. We may well believe that the spirit of man rises upward and that the spirit of animals goes down into the earth, but this never becomes visible in human experience. In terms of what we see, man is exactly like the animals.

This is, of course, not the only thought that comes to the Preacher as he reflects on the problem of death. In Eccl. 12:7 he goes out from the premise that "the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." But as we have said the Preacher is not dealing here with the problem of death as such. He only brings it into his purview incidentally to make his point about the sameness of man and animals. And he brings up this sameness only to incidentally to make a point about the insignificance of

man. It is this that should come to our minds when we consider all the injustice that exists in the world.

Yet, it is precisely in the context of injustice that the problem of death becomes urgent. A great deal of injustice goes unpunished for a long time. It continues, while we pass on. And we never see it punished. We leave this world tempted by the thought that the world is purposeless, existence meaningless and being no good.

Here, however, comes the proof of the pudding. Are we ready so to respect the Lord God, and therefore accept, bear and cover with love existing injustices that we keep on loving until the end—until death?

This is the culminating wisdom that the entire Bible drives at: we must go through the world with such a radical faith and hope that love is foremost; so that we accept and bear in love everything that is real, even that which is dreadful to us. In the process, we are being prepared for the discovery that the consummation of love is the surrender in death to God.

Ecclesiastes does not come that far. That comes in the Gospel of the cross. What Jesus did on the cross gets its perspective from the pain and suffering that accompanies the love for life and for creation that we see in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Christian living

Do you know what music your kids are listening to?

Lisa M. Petsche

As our eldest child approached adolescence and began expressing interest in popular music a few years ago, my husband and I faced a common parental dilemma: how much control to exert over her music consumption right now, and how to teach her to make responsible choices for the long term.

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) cites music as "one of the most popular and powerful forms of media our kids consume." In fact, the average teen accesses four to six hours of music a day, according to the Centre for Parent/Youth Understanding (CPYU), a non-profit organization that equips parents and teens to respond to adolescent challenges through a Christian worldview.

Music plays such a significant role in kids' lives, explains Mnet, because it "offers a potent form of expression for the complex issues young people deal with as they pass through adolescence to adulthood."

While "music has always had the power to strike fear into parents' hearts," there is more cause for concern today because "popular music lyrics have become much more explicit," Mnet says.

Referring to heavy metal, shock-rock and rap, it points out how, "once relegated to the fringes, profanity- and hate-filled 'rage' music has entered the mainstream of popular culture and become the cash cow of the music industry." Racism and sexism are common.

Then there are the "midriff-baring (female artists like) Christina Aguilera and Britney

Spears (who) may be marketed under a 'girl power' guise – but what they are really selling to their mostly pre-pubescent audiences is adult sexuality," Mnet points out.

Other negative pressures relate to, among other things, "alcohol abuse, drug abuse, clothing styles, body image, violence (including against women), material possessions, (and) cheating," observes CPYU president Walt Mueller.

He also points to "the growing crisis of dis-integrated faith", spawned by pop culture icons who are "outspoken about a faith that not only isn't integrated into all of life, but seemingly isn't desired to be integrated into all of life." He argues that this phenomenon "promotes a confusing and contradictory message and lifestyle that is nothing less than dangerous."

Despite the Record Industry Association – of America's contention that lyrics have limited influence on kids' music choices, arguably "every song, every CD, every artist, every video, etc. communicates something to us about what to believe and how to live in this world," says Mueller.

While some messages are explicit, others are so subtle that they "soften us to sin without our knowing it," notes Bob Smithouser in his March 2005 Brio magazine High Voltage column.

Whether subtle or direct, negative messages contained in today's popular music – and often modeled through artists' lifestyles – "could have an impact on impressionable young people who are just developing a sense of identity and self-worth," Mnet cautions.

Another reality is that today's children have unprecedented access to music, courtesy of cable music stations and the Internet. Much of it is unsupervised. (A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that parents watch TV with their two-to seven-year-olds only 19 per cent of



Farmers hungry for consumer food tax

Maynard van der Galien

Two winters ago I attended a workshop in Renfrew that studied the establishment of a small charge on the retail sale of food. The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) proposed that the small tax would go to farmers for environmental services – keeping the countryside attractive and environmentally friendly.

The concept of a food tax was something new. There were many questions. Who collects the levy? If it starts at one per cent, will it end up much higher? How will the money be distributed? What per cent is going to be taken off for administration? What about imported food? Could some of the money also go to Ontario's 226 food banks?

After all the pros and cons had been well discussed, I asked the facilitator, Elbert van Donkersgoed, if he could ask for a show of hands to see how many were in favour of the tax.

All hands, except mine, went up. I was dumbfounded.

CFFO did 19 workshops across Ontario on the proposed small charge on the retail sale of food. About 215 members and friends of CFFO participated. Most people thought a levy on food was a good idea.

In conversations about barriers to getting support for the levy, workshop participants identified consumers, farmers, politicians and retailers – in other words, just about everyone – as likely sources of resistance.

Thirty-one per cent thought consumers would resist because they have more pressing issues and the levy would be seen as just another tax.

Twenty-five per cent thought that farmers themselves would resist since it would make consumers more demanding; they would expect vigorous squabbling about who would get the environmental payments.

Fourteen per cent thought that the other players would resist: the general public because changing the status quo is a hard sell; retailers because a farmer-consumer partnership could become a threat to their control; and politicians because they would lose some influence.

It was proposed that a farmer-consumer partnership – not government – control the funds raised by the levy.

These barriers did not dampen the conversation about opportunities that a levy and environmental payments could create.

Thirty-three per cent thought that farmers would have better incomes and a better public image.

Twenty per cent thought that consumers would be empowered to contribute to the environment and would gain from the development of a creative-farmer-consumer partnership.

At the end of the session, participants were asked if they were "willing to pay a small levy on food to create a new source income for farming and the countryside."

Eighty-nine per cent said yes. Wow!

Why were those CFFO farmers so positive towards a food tax? Some say it just might be the only way to save our family farms. Looking at 2002 figures, a one per cent tax on the sale of food in Ontario would bring in \$220 million annually. Another \$130 million could come from the food service sector. That's a handsome sum of money that could go to keep the countryside pretty. It's done in some European countries.

I felt the idea of a food tax wasn't going anywhere – just pie in the sky. I put my notes away in a bottom drawer. Recently, the idea of a food tax has resurfaced again.

Now the Glengarry County Federation of Agriculture (eastern Ontario) is lobbying for a three per cent tax on food to help cover production costs. Without a special food tax, many Glengarry farmers say they'll be hard-pressed to cover input costs this growing season. They say costs of inputs have gone up on average 50 per cent while money received for the crop has stayed relatively unchanged over the past 25 years.

The Glengarry Federation says a three per cent tax would add \$3 to a \$100 grocery bill and bring in an average of \$196 a year per Ontario household. Multiplied by about 4.4 million households, that's \$858.4 million to support production costs.

I'm still opposed! I agree farmers do need more money, however it shouldn't have to come in the form of another tax for the consumer.

Maynard van der Galien is a beef and cash-crop farmer and owns and operates the Old Towne Hall Restaurant and Tea Room in Renfrew, Ont.



the time, and with older kids a mere five per cent of the time.) This is disturbing in light of a study by the American Academy of Paediatrics which found that approximately 75 per cent of music videos contain sexually suggestive material and more than 50 per cent contain violence. It's also troubling because music videos have a greater impact than simply listening to songs. The combination of music's energy with powerful visual images makes them "impossible to ignore," says Mnet.

Alarming, although "many Canadian radio stations will not play music with explicit lyrics ... young children can easily access music by controversial artists by watching their music videos on television," Mnet warns parents.

It also advises that "the audio files, video clips and lyrics for many songs can be freely downloaded from the Internet by anyone, regardless of age." Songs may contain extra content not heard on-air or found in store-bought versions due to censorship.

Given all this, it's easy for today's parents to feel overwhelmed, perhaps even helpless to positively influence music consumption. Next month's column will offer tips on how to help your kids make wise music choices.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three, a clinical social worker and a freelance journalist specializing in family life.

Church Growth

Why are conservative churches growing?

Albert Mohler

Judith Shulevitz wants to know why conservative churches are strong and growing. Writing in the May 12, 2005 edition of *Slate*, Shulevitz shares the confusion of many on the secular left in wondering why strict religious movements appear to be growing while more liberal movements decline.

In recent months, many observers have awakened to the fact that conservative Christianity is a major force in America. Driven by basically secular assumptions, most seem to assume that this phenomenon should be explained by sociological or psychological factors. As Shulevitz acknowledges, the kind of piety and conviction commonly found among evangelicals "is often dismissed as a social pathology."

In her article, "The Power of the Mustard Seed," Shulevitz considers groups beyond conservative Christianity. Nevertheless, the main thrust of her argument is that conservative churches draw strength from the very strictness of their beliefs and practices, whereas more liberal groups dissipate through lowered rates of involvement and diminished truth claims.



Sleeping congregation by Hogarth

Drawing on a significant body of sociological analysis, Shulevitz suggests that what the economists call "rational choice theory" may be the best explanation for the strength of conservative churches. According to this economic theory, individuals act as "rational agents" who make decisions on the basis of self-interest. In other words, persons join conservative churches because they believe such membership to be in their best interests.

In setting forth her case, Shulevitz draws on research conducted by sociologist Laurence R. Iannaccone of Santa Clara University. Iannaccone published an influential essay, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," that was published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1994. Iannaccone was convinced that rational choice theory does explain the relative strength of conservative denominations and the corresponding weakness of more liberal churches. Iannaccone's research was also a reconsideration of the theories of Dean Kelley, whose 1972 book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, set the stage for later debate.

Following Kelley's lead, Iannaccone argued that "strictness" is the clearest indicator of congregational strength and potential for growth. He defines strictness in terms of "complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle." Thus, the churches that require members to hold definite doctrinal beliefs and to share common moral commitments are more likely to grow and remain strong

than churches who have lower expectations in terms of both belief and behavior.

Refuting those researchers who argue that the growth of conservative churches is due to demographic factors, birth rates, and socioeconomic conditions, Iannaccone suggests that doctrinal and behavioral strictness "increases commitment, raises levels of participation, and enables a group to offer more benefits to current and potential members." Thus, these groups are able to "enjoy a competitive advantage over their opposites (who suffer from less commitment, lower participation, and fewer perceived benefits)."

How does this work? Iannaccone explains that "Strict churches proclaim an exclusive truth – a closed, comprehensive and eternal doctrine. They demand adherence to a distinctive faith, morality, and lifestyle. They condemn deviants, shun dissenters, and repudiate the outside world." In other words, the strictness of these congregations comes down to a set of common theological and behavioral expectations and commitments.

In a fascinating analysis, Iannaccone argues that the very strictness of these groups largely eliminates what economists and sociologists call the "free-rider" problem.

Free-riders are, according to this sociological analysis, those who wish to identify with a group without accepting any high level of demand. Conservative churches have few free-riders because the high levels of conviction and counter-cultural moral standards raise the cost of membership

above what free-riders are willing to pay. More liberal churches, on the other hand, are more likely to accept as members those who both believe and behave in ways that would be unacceptable in more conservative churches. Iannaccone's sociological analysis leads him to believe that liberal Protestantism – especially as represented in the so-called "mainline" denominations – suffers from a significant free-rider problem that has led to pervasive weakness.

Iannaccone's rational choice theory analysis clearly contains a large element of truth. After all, it just makes sense that churches marked by higher expectations of behavior and more demanding beliefs are less likely to attract persons of mild to moderate commitment. In the context of postmodern America, members of con-

servative churches have found themselves out of step with the larger culture and, in sociological terms, to be paying a higher price for their commitments. Can a church be too strict? Iannaccone clearly believes so, and argues that churches given to extreme eccentricities can suffer from a backlash.

Kelley, Iannaccone, and Shulevitz want to explain the strength of conservative churches in largely sociological terms. Of the three, only Kelley seems to understand that deeper theological issues are at stake. After all, why would members of conservative churches be willing to pay such a high price for membership if there is no compelling reason to do so? This is where rational choice theory runs into a direct collision with theology.

A more comprehensive analysis has been offered by researchers Dean R. Hoge, Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens, who conducted a major research project directed at churches affiliated with mainline Protestant denominations. Their work, *Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers*, acknowledges that the basic dynamic behind church growth and decline is theological rather than sociological or economic.

These researchers argue that the most important factor making churches strong is "the presence of a compelling teaching concerning the ultimate purpose and destiny of humankind." Dean Kelley identified this "compelling teaching" as "meanings." These meanings make demands upon be-

lievers, and these believers are far more likely to congregate together, rather than to join more liberal churches. Holding to strong beliefs, conservative Christians are less likely to accept weaker beliefs as being equally valid.

Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens are clear: "Our findings show that belief is the single best predictor of church participation, but it is orthodox Christian belief, and not the tenets of lay liberalism, that impels people to be involved in church."

When these researchers speak of "lay liberalism," they refer to a phenomenon they observed among mainline baby boomers, whose vision of Christianity involves very few definite beliefs or moral obligations. "Although lay liberalism has several different versions," they explain, "its defining feature is the rejection of the claim that Christianity, or any other faith, is the only true religion. Lay liberals have no compelling truth, no 'good news,' to proclaim, and few of them share the views that they do have with their friends and acquaintances."

Judith Shulevitz suggests that liberal denominations should look to this body of research and modify themselves so that their members will find deeper meaning and connection. Her answer is a recovery of ritual. Nevertheless, her concept of ritual has no specific theological content. As she argues, "the greatest religious leaders have understood [that] ritual is theater. You can use it to send any message you want."

In other words, she missed the point entirely. Laurence Iannaccone's rational choice theory can actually explain very little about conservative Christianity. Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens offer a much more substantial and accurate analysis. The fundamental issues are theological, not sociological. Evangelicals are willing to pay a high social cost for the Christian faith, precisely because we believe the Gospel to be true. Furthermore, Christians know better than to expect fulfillment in this world. True satisfaction will be realized only in the age to come, and a perspective focused on eternity transforms the questions of everyday life.

Just consider the apostle Paul. Writing to the Philippian Christians, Paul asserted, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." That, more than anything else, explains why churches that believe and teach the Gospel are growing, and why those who have abandoned the Gospel are dying.

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JUNE 27, 2005

Vacations

Vacation reflections



Standing on the corner watching all the people go by in a small village in northern France, I suddenly was drawn to the sound of the music of Elton John's song *Candle in the Wind*, as it wafted from a nearby window.

Elton John sang this song for his friend princess Diana during her funeral service. I was one of the people who truly mourned the death of Diana. I had a deep admiration for her, not because of her beauty, which truly was exceptional, but because she worked hard to be a real person and to be true to herself in spite of her somewhat stately life situation. To be real in the environment she lived in seemed arduous to me and must have been a challenging task. She worked hard at it for better or for worse. It reflected her gift and her strong spirit.

I was only able to observe her from a distance, but I felt an understanding for the complexities of her life. When *Candle in the Wind* became available on CD I bought the recording immediately. Hearing the song so unexpectedly triggered my memory of the time of her death and also led me to reflect on the many unexpected happenings that have come to me during the past several weeks while I am on holiday.

I am on vacation in Europe. It is the retirement vacation for my husband and myself. After having spent almost two weeks in Holland, we drove via Belgium to northern France. One of our goals was to see the beaches of Normandy. We plan to spend two more weeks in France and then go home to Canada. We are having a lot of fun. Our way of traveling, or our philosophy of traveling, is to take a travel book, make a vague plan for each day and then see where life leads us. We don't book a place to sleep in advance.

This can only be done in the off season, such as in May and June, or in September or October. We prefer the early part of the year when nature is fresh and the days are long. Our way of traveling is not for everyone. It requires flexibility and an ability to take things as they come. Our approach is to make a decision and go with it, no second guessing or rehashing.

Most of our slightly informed decisions turn out just great and end up offering us wonderful surprises, even to the extent that we say it couldn't be better if we had planned it.

In Holland I looked for the grave of my grandparents. While at the cemetery I met a woman. She pointed to a

gravesite and said, "This is the grave of my mother. She died thirty years ago. I always know what to do the day after I visit her grave."

Not quite understanding what she meant, I nodded in agreement.

Then she said, "I bring a pail with soap and water and a brush, and I scrub all the moss off her gravestone. I can't believe how quickly the stone turns green."

It struck me that keeping her mother's stone clean was an important way for her to express her love for her mother.

I am unexpectedly reminded of past experiences while I am in Holland. Dormant



memories come to life when I see stately swans floating on little rivers in between green pastures, lazy black and white colored cows grazing in green fields, and poppies swaying in the wind, amidst yellow buttercups and white daisies. It is just the right time of year for these kinds of memories.

A highlight of being in Holland was meeting my sister, who also lives in Canada, on the market square in the historic city of Bredevoort, the city of our birth. Sitting outside in the sunshine in front of the centuries old cafe, we reminisced over coffee and the best apple pie in the world.

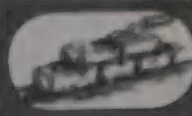
"Remember the annual kermis on the market square and how we were never allowed to participate in it because it was considered unchristian and how we sometimes sneaked out anyways to look at the rides?" she said. I remembered it though I had forgotten it until she reminded me. It was interesting to compare memories with each other and to note the different things we remembered.

While in Holland I also discovered a few things I never knew. One of these is that my mother insisted on attending the baptism of her eighth child, against the advice of family members. My aunt told me about it.

In those days tradition was that babies were baptized the first Sunday after birth. This meant that mothers tended not to be present at the baptism as they had to stay in bed for ten days. When I heard this story I was excited by the idea that my mother had feminist ideas at that time already. I am proud of her.

BuildingTrust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



As we drove through Belgium we saw the fields of Flanders. Driving through these wheat fields and seeing the red poppies everywhere made the poem about the First World War come alive. Visiting the beaches of Normandy and war museums in various villages along the beach also made us more aware and in awe of the price of life paid by many young soldiers when they liberated Europe. The coastline of Normandy is lined with cemeteries of fallen soldiers many under the age of twenty.

In contrast to the history of war and the brutality of war associated with the coast of Normandy, the scenery in this part of France is stunningly tranquil and beautiful. Normandy is a land of fields, flowers and stone. It is very agricultural, and there are flowers blooming everywhere. Flowers grow in every nook and cranny alongside old greystone houses and trail over every gate and old greystone wall. There are more varieties of roses here than I have ever seen in my entire life. I met a man who proudly showed me his Charles de Gaulle rose.

Normandy has very many old churches, mansions, and villas, all surrounded by beautiful gardens. Given its history since World War Two this is a land of contrast. There is peace and harmony in nature accompanied by stories of war and violence.

Peace and harmony is what we are looking for on this vacation and it is being given to us in many different ways. Our bed and breakfast for the night overlooks the ocean. There are birds singing in the trees and sheep and chickens darting in the yard. Right now our host is cooking a steak for us. He has even offered me the use of his computer to write this column. Life is good. It is the small things that make the big picture of life very good.



View from Mont Saint Michel, Normandy

Hearing the song *Candle in the Wind* started this reflection. In some ways we are all candles in the wind. We try to live life the best we can, but there are winds we encounter. The candle of princess Diana burned out too soon. For us our candle is still burning. Sometimes we feel as if it is blowing in the wind also, But still it is still burning. Right now I am blessed by a gentle and comforting breeze. I hope to take it home with me to Canada in a few weeks.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, or e-mail at : vickyv@telus.net

Opinion

Mainly on Money

Bert Hielema

Our daughter sold her place on the edge of Beverly Hills. She had an open house with a 100 people crowding through. One single lady bought it for just under one million dollars. Cash. Her father is putting up the money.

California has had tax revolts in the past. One of them resulted in a crazy real estate tax scheme, not based on current value, but on the last purchase price. Our son-in-law bought it some 20 years ago when he was still single and paid \$260,000 for this 1500 square foot bungalow – no basement, fire place, 2 bathrooms, double attached garage. Its lot perhaps 40 x 80. So his annual property charge remained low, about \$3,000.00, in spite of a fourfold rise in value. The new owner will see her taxes increase to some \$12,000 per year.

Will this housing boom last? The better question is "Will money stay cheap?" I read that seventy percent of new mortgages in California are interest only. They remain that for a 5 year period, but then they have to make up for lost time, condensing the usual term of 30 years into 25, so overnight payments increase dramatically.

But people there don't mind. Americans always believe in a better tomorrow. You can even get a one year 1 percent mortgage. The catch is that the needed extra 5 percent interest is then added to the principal, so, say on an average \$400,000 mortgage, normally needing a monthly payment of some \$2,500.00, but only getting \$350.00 for the first year – 'saving' the borrower more than \$2,000 per month – the extra \$24,000 is added to the total, increasing the outstanding debt to \$424,000.00. People do the funniest things in America.

No wonder they are a gambling lot. They have to be to engage in this sort of financing. In spite of vast evidence to the contrary, many Americans bank on making more money in the future. They also assume that property values keep on increasing and interest rates remaining low. All very dubious bets.

Our daughter, her husband and 2 daughters are moving to New Mexico, where prices went up by only 30 percent in the last 5 years, compared to more than double in California in that same period. They'll benefit from the move and so will we, because Santa Fe, first settled by the Spanish, is the oldest city in the USA, with a fascinating history and an intriguing indigenous population, the Navajos.

So what is in store? Will this win-win situation last? Not likely. Americans have had a riotous ride for a while: cheap gas, cheap money. The economy has just been fabulous for the folks in the United States. It's been like winning a huge lottery. Even though Bush and Rumsfeld keep on telling us that there is a war going on, it doesn't feel like it at all. The war I remember in

1940-45 was not a lot of fun: food rationing, personal danger, no cigarettes – one of the greatest hardships imaginable in those days. The tobacco that was available was the homegrown variety. Pretty poisonous, but its growing was as passionately pursued and as profitable as marijuana grown today, eagerly inhaled by nicotine addicts – almost every male over 15 years old, me included.

In spite of our intestines being contaminated, because we were forced to eat less, and the only means of transport being either 2 legs or 2 solid rubber wheels, people were generally healthier then, at least in North Netherlands where I lived. We also slept a lot and played a lot of Monopoly and chess. So the war did have some side benefits.

The war today has none of these features. Oh yes, some sixty soldiers are killed each month but that's much less than the number of young people dying in car accidents in a week. Rationing? Shortage of food? The opposite is true. I was astounded to see huge new shopping centres arising near St. Paul. Fancy stuff, stores supposedly resembling quaint English villages, with cobblestone streets and fake gas lights. Prosperity forever.

Although all wars cause inflation, this one, seemingly, is benign to the economy. That's because, by some freak way of calculating the rise in prices, three major categories – used by every American soul – are not included: energy, food and the cost of housing, which, by itself, comprises 30 percent of the Consumer Price Index. Figure that out. Housing is not measured by its cost but by the rent factor. Because anybody who is somebody has bought a place of their own, rental properties go empty, so rents have declined. GM and Ford give their cars away. No wonder that official inflation has remained flat.

By now you know that I am a bear. By that I mean that I have a dim view of the North American economy. I see bubbles everywhere. A tremendous debt bubble, running into the trillions. Big belly bubbles, usually called obesity, straining the health system. An Old Age bubble, taxing the social security provisions. Ever rising energy and housing bubbles. In the USA twin trade and deficit bubbles. Even the weather holds a bubble, with Global Warming.

Bubbles, bubbles everywhere. It takes only pinpricks to burst them.

From one daughter in California to another living in St. Paul, Minnesota.

There I bought a book. Read all of its 422 pages, much of it quite technical. But then, I am on holidays, so no weeding or grass mowing, no need to help in preparing meals or doing dishes: just sit around, read, do my journal and diary, run, play a bit of tennis, eat, drink my daily one cup of coffee, and read again: the local paper, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Barron's*, and, of course, the book that I bought in St. Paul at Barnes and Nobles: *Twilight in the*

Desert, with as subtitle, "The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy."

The author, Matthew R. Simmons, a wealthy banker, with 32 years of experience in financing oil exploration across the globe, is no sensationalist, not a person with an axe to grind, nor a man to exploit one issue and blow it out of proportion. He has made it his life's mission to alert the world to the highly precarious position we have eased ourselves into, becoming totally dependent on soon-to-peak carbon-based fuels, especially from the Middle East, without preparing an alternative. In a single sentence he says that Saudi oil sources are on unsustainable steroids.

Are you listening? The matter he broaches concerns us all, especially you, people in power, you politicians in Ontario, Canada, USA, everywhere in what we call our civilized world.

My plea to those who govern is to come clean and tell the hard truth.

Mr Simmons, billion-dollar banker, respected Republican, takes different approaches, sometimes cautious when he writes: "A production decline in a period of five years or less in any or all of the Saudi Arabia's key producing fields is not out of question. Perhaps the old adage will apply to the Saudi giants and super-giants: The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

But he can also be quite direct when he, a close friend of Dick Cheney, claims correctly: "Securing adequate oil supplies was, after all, an important element in all the major wars of the twentieth century and in the United States' two most important interventions in the Middle East."

However, Simmons is quite unambiguous when he states: "There is not a single contingency plan in place by any of the think tanks of the world that sets out a model how the world can continue to function smoothly once it is clear that Saudi Arabian oil has peaked... It is this total lack of any 'alternative scenario thinking' that makes this unavoidable event so alarming."

Of course the Saudis strenuously deny any notion of an Oil Peak. They keep on insisting that they can pump 20 million barrels per day for 50 years. To admit otherwise would expose them as liars. So here is one of those crazy notions which always seem to pop up in me when I am running: "The Saudis don't want to lose face. Neither can they deliver. My bet is that they will engineer a major act of sabotage that will effectively shut down their oil production and save them public embarrassment."

Which doesn't, of course, solve our pressing problem of insufficient oil.

When, not if, that happens, and a post-Saudi oil era is upon us, we are in for truly tumultuous times.

So there is reason for worry. No economy – very few persons are prepared for something new under the sun: how to deal with falling supply while world-wide demand is still rising. We, my wife and I, are somewhat ready for this. We already have solar panels, use wood heat, built a passive solar house, well insulated, partly into a hill with one storey on the north and two storeys facing south with lots of windows there.

We also drive a frugal car, running on bio-diesel, and cultivate a large vegetable garden. Sorry to sound self-righteous here, but we never use plastic shopping bags, bike to town whenever possible, replaced all our light bulbs with energy savings ones. We constantly concentrate on energy savings and health concerns.

That's a mindset we all have to acquire. Start with easy steps: turn off unnecessary lights. Turn off your engine when stopped for longer than 10 seconds. Both measures save money and pollution. Try to live smaller and more frugally. Prepare yourself physically and mentally for Peak Oil conditions, because we don't know when the Tipping Point will come.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario. Earlier columns can be viewed at hielem.ca



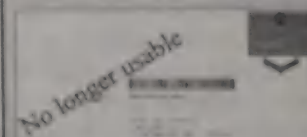
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Osoyoos - CJOR 8:00 am	1490
Penticton - CKOR 8:00 am	800
Port Alberni - CJAV 7:00 pm	1240
Prince George - CIRX 7:00 am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR 8:00 am	1400
Smithers - CFBV 9:15 am	1230
Summerville - CHOR 8:00 am	1450
Vernon - CJIB 9:30 pm	94
ALBERTA	
Brooks - CIBQ 8:30 am	1340
FL McMurray - CJOK 8:30 am	1230
High River - CHRB 6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton - CJCA 6:00 pm	930
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Estevan - CJSL 8:00 am	1280
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Winnipeg - CKJS 9:00 am	810
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London - CKSL 7:00 am	1410
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Pembroke - CHVR 10:00 am	96.7
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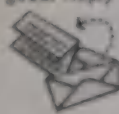
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Classifieds

Personals

Bachelor, 40 years old looking for Christian woman. Does not have to be thin or tall. Warm personality and a sense of humor would be good. Reply to:



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Births

With praise & thankfulness to our heavenly Father
Klaas & Hammie Holman wish to announce

the birth of our great-granddaughter
Paige Morgan Holman
born to April Holman & Randy Greenway
on April 10, 2005

our grandson
Alexander Derek Holman
born to Walter Holman & Nella Plumstead
on April 19, 2005 and

our granddaughter
Melissa Anne Skrobar
born to Gregory & Angela Skrobar
on May 11, 2005.



Anniversaries

Den Haag July 23 Orillia
1955 2005



With thanksgiving and praise to the Lord
for his faithfulness we celebrate
the 50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY of

GERARD and NELL RINGNALD
(nee VERSEVELDT)

With love from your children and grandchildren

Jackie Ringnald
Gerrit, Mariel and Nathan
Arda and Jim Rooks
Linnelle, Laura, Sarah and Elia
Helen and Ed Van Beilen
Brenden, Aaron and Marcel
Wilma and Rick Guetter
Jordan, Eric and Rachel
Arie and April Ringnald

We invite you to join us for an OPEN HOUSE
on the lawn at 294 Bay Street, Orillia
on Saturday, July 16, from 2:00 to 5:00 pm



Or send greetings to Gerry and Nel at
294 Bay Street, Orillia ON L3V 3X3
email - gringnald@sympatico.ca

BEST WISHES ONLY



With gratitude to the Lord
who made this possible, we

TOM and HENNIE BERGSMA

hope to celebrate our
50th Wedding Anniversary on July 9, 2005.
Open House from 2 - 4 p.m.
at East Christian Reformed Church,
476 Melrose St. E. Strathroy Ont.

Home Address: 221 Southfield Dr
Strathroy ON N7G 3V3

Springdale, Ontario July 6 Thamesville, Ontario

It is with joy and thankfulness to God, that
we announce the **50th Wedding Anniversary**
of our parents and grandparents

WILLEM (Bill) and NEELTJE (Nell) GEERTSEMA
(nee Nieuwland)

Congratulations Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa!
You have been a blessing to each other,
and to all of us, and it is our prayer
that the Lord will continue to provide for you.

John Wayne & Janet Geertsema, Barrie, Ontario
Aaron & Carissa, Janelle, Katelyn, Kelly
Andy & Lee Geertsema, LeRoy, Ontario
Guy, Matthew & Heather, Robin, Jacquelyn
Gary & Bonnie Geertsema, Bradford, Ontario
Jason & Samantha - Kaden,
Shelley, Michael, Shaun

Rob & Barb Geertsema, Thamesville, Ontario
Kristen & Dave, Justin, Rachel, Leah
Mark & Dianna Geertsema, Bradford, Ontario
Timothy, Jenna, Jeremy
Monica & Dave Jessop, Beeton, Ontario
Laura, Bradley

Home Address: RR # 7
Thamesville ON N0P 2K0

1955 July 16 2005

With joy and thanksgiving to God

KEITH and MAGDA STELPSTRA (Devries)

hope to celebrate our
50th Wedding Anniversary with our family
Joanne & John Hultsing, Edmonton Alta.
Teresa & Jeff Linker, London Ont.
Marjorie & Rick Vanmuers, Stratford Ont.
Keith & Christina Stelpstra, Kelowna BC
and our 16 grandchildren

An Open House will be scheduled at a later date.

Home Address: 1944 Duluth Crescent
London ON N5V 1H7

Obituaries

REMKE KOOISTRA, 1917 - 2005

The Rev. Dr. Remkes Kooistra passed away unexpectedly but peacefully at Grace Manor of the Holland Christian Homes, Brampton Ontario, on Monday, May 30, 2005, at the age of 88. After a lifetime of faith and work, the Lord has called his servant home.

Rem was born on May 22, 1917 in the village of Wijk aan Zee aan Duin, Noord Holland, the Netherlands, to Klaas and Jacoba Kooistra (Van Oene). He is predeceased by his parents and younger brother Gerrit, and is survived by his two younger sisters, Zwan and Iep, and his sister-in-law, Margreet.

Feeling the call to ministry, Rem attended the seminary in Kampen and later earned his doctorate in theology and sociology from the Free University of Amsterdam. Rem's love of learning and teaching continued throughout the rest of his life.

Rem married his beloved wife, Jantje (Jannette) Feddema on December 15, 1943, at Hoogeveen, Drente. They have enjoyed 61 years of marriage together. The Lord blessed them with four children: Dorothy (Grietje Theodora), Jacky (Jacobus Benedicta), Clare (Klaas Mirandus), and John (Johannes Pieter Gratianus).

Rem enjoyed serving as a minister to six congregations and later as a campus minister.

On March 5, 1955, Rem and his family immigrated to Canada by airplane, full of excitement to start a new life. He then ministered to the three congregations of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in Canada - Red Deer, Alberta, Trenton, Ontario, and in Toronto, Ontario.

Rem has always been concerned with justice, both in his church and in society at large. As part of his work with the CRC, Rem was active in many committees and organizations, including the synodical committee on women in ecclesiastical offices. He also helped set up the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). Rem's heart for disadvantaged people and for evangelism also led him to organize the Lighthouse, a ministry which reaches out to new immigrants in downtown Toronto. Rem led several tours to the land of Israel, and he visited the Christian Reformed missions and seminary in Nigeria.

Rem loved his work as campus chaplain to the Universities of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier, and Guelph. He worked with students as a pastor, teacher, mentor and counselor. Rem married over 70 couples (university students) during his chaplaincy there. Later on, Rem took on the challenge of teaching Greek and Dutch courses for St. Paul's College and the University of Waterloo. He also gave occasional courses or lectures at the Institute for Christian Studies, Calvin College, and Redeemer University College.

He will be fondly remembered by many students who passed through his classes and were touched by his life and intellect. Rem also served as hospital chaplain for hospitals in the Waterloo area, and reached out to many people of the community through his comfort in times of sickness and death.

Gorichem, The Neth. Petrolia, Ontario
February 27, 1916 May 26, 2005

The Lord took home to live with him our dearly loved mother

CORNELIA ADRIANA KALDEWAY (nee Scheurwater)

She quoted Psalm 68:10 in Dutch two days before passing away:
Let God be praised with reverence deep; He daily comes our lives to steep
In bounties freely given, God cares for us, our God is he;
Who would not fear his majesty in earth as well as heaven?
Our God upholds us in the strife, To us he grants eternal life,
He saves their souls when death draw nigh, This God is our salvation.

Predeceased by her loving husband Laurens KaldeWAY (1997) and daughter Coby (1957). Loving mother of:
Margaret & John Vanderlaan, Port Lambton, Ont.
Bert & Minnie KaldeWAY, Orono Ont.
Herman & Cheryl KaldeWAY, Wyoming, Ont.
John & Karen KaldeWAY, Wyoming Ont.

Dear grandmother of 16 grandchildren,
32 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild.

The funeral service was held May 30, 2005 at 2nd Christian Ref. Church, Sarnia, Ont., Rev. Ralph Wigboldus officiating.

Correspondence: Marg Vanderlaan, 3959 Seaway Rd
Port Lambton ON N0P 2B0



Rem enjoyed reading, gardening, camping, and fishing, but his great past-time was writing. He wrote a much-needed and widely used catechism instruction booklet, *By Grace Through Faith*, as well as several other study booklets on faith and theology. Rem's love of languages, especially English, Dutch, German, and Greek, led him to translate several works, including AJ Wolters' book, *Creation Regained*. More recently, Rem enjoyed learning to use the computer for typing and writing. His last published work was a collection of stories about the Second World War and the Holocaust, entitled, *Where Was God?* for which he interviewed many holocaust survivors from the Waterloo area. Though he suffered from physical ailments in the last few years, Rem always returned to his writing with zest and vigour.

Rem will be sorely missed by many friends, colleagues, and relatives, as well as by his beloved wife and his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This short history only shows the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of Rem's accomplishments, contributions, and investments into people's lives. We humbly thank God for Rem's life and the gifts and legacy he left behind.

Jannette Kooistra

Dorothy & John Kraft

Jason Kraft

Gerard Kraft

Jacky & Theo Vandeputte

Jody & Clarence Roast - Masazi, Chilinga

Denise & Tim Hill - Julia

Robin & Harold Winter

Christopher, Rebecca, Susanna, Isaiah

Casey & Felicia Vandeputte - Jordan, Neil

Michelle & Terry Smides

Russell Vandeputte

Clare Kooistra

Remy & Stephanie Kooistra

Rhya Kooistra

John & Gail Kooistra

Jola Kooistra

December 31, 1930 June 9, 2005
Groningen, The Neth. Oakville, Ontario

DONALD WIERSMA

went home to be with his Lord

Beloved husband of Sally (Yff)

Treasured father & grandfather of:

Karen & Cecil VanNieuwenhuis,

Edmonton, Alberta

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Sara, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Minam, Edmonton, Alberta

Donna & Bill Leo, Mississauga, Ontario

Tara

Alex

Pam & Shawn Howard, Mississauga, Ont.

Sean

Brother to: Theresa Salomons,

George & Jack Wiersma

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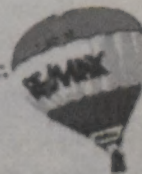
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Job opportunities/Classifieds

JUBILEE



Dordt College Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

January 2006

Social Work BSW Program Director/Faculty

Administration, program planning, and supervision, as well as teaching

August 2006

Social Work

Teach in generalist BSW program with a focus on social welfare policy, child and family welfare, and research

Youth Ministry and Biblical Studies

Teach general education courses in biblical theology, a section of the first-term seminar, and courses related to the youth ministry emphasis

To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

PARKVIEW MEADOWS RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Townsend, Ontario

A Christian Retirement Facility with 30 rental apartments, 35 life-lease apartments and 29 bed assisted living area, is in the process of constructing a 64 bed long term care addition. We are currently seeking applications for the following positions;

Director of Dietary and Environmental Services – Full time

– responsible for the operation and management of the Dietary, Housekeeping and Laundry Departments consistent with the Mission and Values of Parkview Meadows.

Qualifications: Two-year Food Service Supervisor Program.

Current registration in The Canadian Society of Nutrition Management. Three to five years experience in food service and environmental services management in a health care setting preferably in Long Term Care. Computer literacy required (word processing, spreadsheet, and database).

Manager of Program Services – Full time

Responsible for the operation and management of the Activation, Therapy and Volunteer coordination for the facility consistent with the Mission and Values of Parkview Meadows. Qualifications: Must have a minimum of 3 years supervisory experience that includes budget and activity planning, scheduling, implementing and developing recreational programs and coordinating volunteers in a long-term care setting. A diploma in activation, recreational leadership or leisure studies from a recognized community college or university.

Interested candidates are invited to submit, in confidence, their resume to

mlambert@parkviewmeadows.ca or fax (519) 587-5692

JUBILEE



Dordt College Dean of Chapel

Dordt College is seeking an enthusiastic Christian to serve as *Dean of Chapel*. Reporting to the Vice President of Student Services, primary responsibilities will include nurturing the spiritual life of the college community through preaching, teaching, discipleship training, worship leadership, and pastoral care.

Candidates should possess a Master's Degree in Divinity, and a ThM and/or PhD. Three years of related experience and campus ministry training is also highly desired. Candidates who are ordained or ordainable in a confessional Reformed denomination are preferred. Demonstrated teaching ability, as well as strong pastoral skills in the area of spiritual formation and counseling are desired. Good organizational skills, as well as strong verbal and written communication skills are essential.

Qualified candidates with a personal commitment to a Reformed, biblical faith and the mission of Dordt College should forward a letter of application and resume to Susan Droog, Director of Human Resources at the address listed below.

Dordt College
498 Fourth Ave NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
Phone: (712) 722-6017
Fax: (712) 722-1198
E-mail: sdroog@dordt.edu

Dordt College does not discriminate as to sex, age, national origin, marital status or against those who are disabled.

SHALOM MANOR Requires a Medical Director

Shalom Manor (Grimsby, Ontario) is a 144 bed Reformed Christian Dutch ethnic non-profit long-term care home requiring a Medical Director as of September 1, 2005. We are a new Class "A" facility with all Ministry of health policies including restraint-free and minimal lift policies in effect. Excellent opportunities. Interested physicians please contact

Shalom Manor at 905-945-9631, extension 1151, or email info@shalommanor.ca for more information.



Ministry Job Opportunities

Youth Pastor:

HEBRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,

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Ordained Worship Leader:

WESTEND CRC, a congregation of 786 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is looking for an outgoing, hardworking individual to join our Ministry Team. A person with gifts in the area of worship leadership and musical talent is the perfect fit for this full time position. Preaching and pastoral duties will be required from time to time, but are not the main focus of the job. We look forward to hearing from individuals that are interested in leading, organizing, and inspiring our dedicated congregation in worship. Additional responsibilities will include Outreach and/or Adult Ministries depending on the qualifications of the candidate. For more information contact Search Committee Chair June Atsma at (616) 453-0320 or e-mail at jatsma@schs.org.

Available for Call

The council of Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta wishes to announce that after a year of sabbatical studies,

Rev. Kirk MacNeil

is available for call.

Pastor Kirk can be reached at
13011 - 39th Street
Edmonton AB T5A 5A3
by email at
rational@telusplanet.net
or janetandkirk@msn.com
or by phone at (780) 456-5362

FRISIAN SERVICE

July 10, 2005 3:00 p.m.
in the Ancaster Christian
Reformed Church
Rev. John Hellinga will be preaching.

DUTCH SERVICE

June 26, 2005 3:00 p.m.
Ancaster Christian
Reformed Church
Rev. J. Kuntz
will be preaching



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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

June 24-26 Christian Reformed Church of **Kentville, Nova Scotia** will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. For more details contact Gerrit Tenyenhuis, ph. 1-902-678-7641 or gtenyenhuis@nssympatico.ca or the church at 1-902-678-6293 or fax 1-902-679-5230. Email: kentvillecrc@ns.sympatico.ca

June 26 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

July 1-3 **Nobleford CRC** 100th year anniversary celebrations with picnic, banquet and services. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net

July 7 The 10th Annual International Music Festival, Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in **Grimsby**, 8 p.m. Renowned choirs will perform directed by their own conductors: the Boston City Singers (Massachusetts), Hamilton Conservatory Children's Choir (Ontario), and Young Naperville Singers (Illinois). Tickets are \$10.00 per person.

July 9 The 10th Annual International Music Festival, Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in **Grimsby**, 8 p.m. Massed Choir Concert featuring 8 international choirs under the directions of the highly acclaimed Stephen Hatfield. Tickets are \$10.00 per person.

July 8-10 **Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church** will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. For information, contact the church office at **902-894-4721** or email: chtowncrrc@pei.aibn.com.

July 10 Frisian Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga will be preaching.

July 23 **Wieringermeerdag**, 10 a.m. at Queens Park Drive, **Stratford**. Potluck lunch. Phone 1-519-631-6234 for more information.

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News

CRC Synod to call First Toronto on the carpet

Synod 2005, meeting in Trinity College in Palos Heights, Illinois, spent a great amount of time on an item that took up only a few pages in the 600-page agenda – First Toronto CRC. “CRC to investigate Toronto congregation” was the headline in the Grand Rapids Press. After spending an entire evening discussing whether to convene a regional synod to deal with the matter, Synod sent it back to committee for further deliberation the next day.

Some delegates expressed impatience with First Toronto. After backing off from its declared intent to nominate gay office bearers, the church promised to submit a position paper to classis. That has not been forthcoming.

An overture before Synod called for the deposition of the church’s minister, Nick Overduin, and its elders.



Presiding over Synod 2005 are Rev. Gordon Pols, first clerk Rev. Stanley Mast, vice president Rev. Wayne Brouwer, president Donald Dykstra, second clerk

“I cannot be a part of saying to them, ‘You go to hell. We don’t want you anymore,’” said the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, a retired minister from Ferrysburg.

“Certainly we will not tell anyone to go to hell,” retorted the Rev. Richard deLange of Ontario. “We simply are trying to get them to the table to talk.”

Rev. Bernie Haan Jr. of Iowa, chairman of the advisory committee, said Synod should ask: “Does their position

say something new that would help us as a denomination better minister to the gay community?”

Synod at last decided to send a committee to investigate the church’s position on persons living in same-sex relationships. It is to report to the meeting of Classis Toronto in September and to make recommendations to classis for deliberation and action. The committee was given a man-

date to convene a combined meeting of the four area classes – Quinte, Huron, Hamilton and Toronto – if necessary to assist it in dealing with the issues. It is to bring a report to Synod 2006 about its actions and recommendations.

(In view of the fact that every CRC household will receive a full report on everything that happened in Synod 2005 in *The Banner*, CC decided not to cover Synod this year.)

Europe turning cold on Turkey

Yigal Schleifer

ISTANBUL, TURKEY – For Turks, the latest developments in Europe have been understandably dispiriting.

At the European Union summit held last week, all references to Turkey and other candidates for EU expansion were dropped from the summit declaration. This comes on the heels of the rejection of a new EU constitution in recent referendums in the Netherlands and France, due at least partially to opposition to predominantly Muslim Turkey’s joining the EU.

Meanwhile, upcoming elections in Germany could bring into power the conservative Christian Democrats, who oppose Turkish membership in the bloc; and the presumed front-runner for the 2007 presidential elections in France, interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, also opposes Ankara’s EU bid. Even the new pope, Benedict XVI, has previously stated that he believes that Turkey integrating with Europe would be a “mistake.”

Viewed from Turkey, the road toward the country’s long-hoped-for EU membership suddenly seems a whole lot longer.

What observers in Turkey and Europe are now asking is whether the EU’s political disarray and the more pronounced opposition to Turkish membership in Eu-

rope will cause Ankara to reorient itself away from the EU and to ease up on the reforms it had put in place as part of its membership drive.

“Political confusion in Europe ... could initiate a lot of soul searching in Turkey,” says Suat Kiniklioglu director of the Turkish office of the German Marshall Fund. It could lead to calls for everything from creating stronger alliances with [central Asia’s Turkic republics] to opening up to the Middle East to getting closer to Russia, he says.

The clearest reaction to the EU’s internal turmoil so far has been a turn to Turkey’s old ally, the United States. Realizing that his country can’t put all its eggs in the EU basket, Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was in Washington last week on a fence-mending trip aimed at restoring ties with the US. Despite the two countries’ decades-long strategic partnership, Turkish-US relations had hit a rocky patch for the past two years, particularly following Ankara’s refusal to allow American troops through its territory at the start of the invasion of Iraq.

“Having the US as a strong ally increases Turkey’s power in the bargaining process, because otherwise the EU will be able to push Turkey for 100 percent compliance

in the negotiations,” says Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkey program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “If the EU sees that it’s the only game in town for Turkey, it will see that it will be able to push for maximum demands. Come October [when accession negotiations with the EU are set to start], Turkey wants to be able to show Brussels that there’s another game in Ankara.”

For now, both Turkish and European officials are saying that membership negotiations will begin as planned. Speaking to parliament after the French and Dutch referendums, Mr. Erdogan said: “This result has nothing to do with Turkey’s candidacy, we will continue on our path with the same enthusiasm.”



EU High Representative Javier Solana welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Abdullah Gül

News Digest

Dutch political party sued for gender discrimination

The right-wing Calvinist party, Staatskundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) has been taken to court in The Netherlands because it denies women equal rights as members. The Dutch state is also on trial for giving subsidies to a party which does not allow women to run as candidates in elections.

The plaintiffs argue that equal rights between men and women should take precedence over freedom of religion.

National differences

A new poll confirms the perception that Americans, as a whole, are far more religious than Europeans. 86 percent of Americans and Mexicans consider religion to be “important” in their lives, but that only 43 percent of residents in the United Kingdom and 37 percent of those in France have a similar attitude.

Nearly 20 percent of Frenchmen and South Koreans said they do not believe in God, while 70 percent of Americans say they “know” God exists and have “no doubts” about it. Only Mexico – at 80 percent – topped the U.S. in that category.

31 percent of the Americans polled said they belonged in the category of “other religion,” outnumbering both Protestants (30 percent) and Catholics (26 percent).

Prime50 Centres

An employment service promoting employment of Canadians over age 50 is expanding its operations across Canada. Its purpose is to help Canadians in their 50s and older find employment, while raising awareness among employers about the value of recruiting and retaining the growing numbers of people from that age bracket who want to continue working. Plans are to open at least fifty Prime50 Centres across Canada in the next few months.

The older brain

Vision and cognitive neuroscientist at McMaster University in Hamilton, Prof. Allison Sekuler and her colleagues have been doing research on the aging brain. They have found that you can teach older brains new tricks. “In some cases,” said Sekuler, “the older brain can actually rewire itself.”

Multitasking, an essential skill related to the brain’s ability to process visual information, declines with age, decade by decade. But the McMaster study, which included 56 young and 40 older people, found that older people can learn to multitask as well as young people if they’re given extra time. Another study found that older adults can do just as well as young adults on visual, short-term memory tests. Interestingly, it also found that older people use different parts of the brain in doing so.

The researchers concluded that older brains were enlisting other parts of the brain to compensate for poorer functioning elsewhere.

We older folks always find a way to overcome. I’ve found in arm-wrestling my son that I have a distinct advantage if I exhale in his face. He wilts like grass in a hot sun.